Charlton SPOTLIGHT

Exploring the History of the Charlton Comics Group

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a conversation with GEORGE WILDMAN (and HY EISMAN, too!)

DICK GIORDANO REMEMBERED

Popeye TM & © King Features Syndicate

BES' O' LUCK TO YA
MIKE!
AN' CHARLTON SPOTLIGHT'
FROM ME YER PAL...
POPEYE!!
CHEERS
AN ME...
Geo Wildman *
8/68
* MANY THANKS FOR THE EXTRA ISSUES, MIKE!!

No. 7 • WINTER-SPRING 2011-2012

Charlton SPOTLIGHT

Exploring the History of the Charlton Comics Group

FRONT COVER
George Wildman
& Friend
***by* Donnie Pitchford**
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BACK COVER
Dick Giordano
& His Many Charltons
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OPPOSITE
Everybody Digs
Charlton Spotlight!
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a conversation with George Wildman *. . . and* Hy Eisman, *too!*

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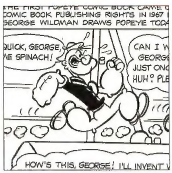

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a conversation with George Wildman . . . and Hy Eisman, too!

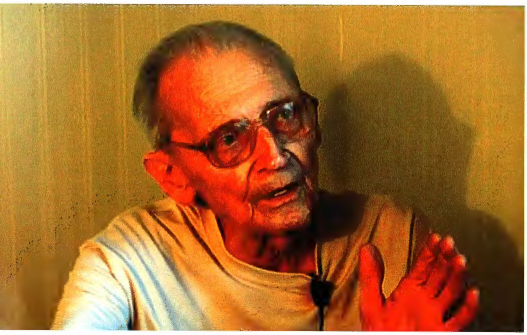
conducted by Donnie Pitchford

transcribed by Brian K. Morris

JANUARY 19, 2009, WAS THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY *of the first appearance of Popeye the Sailor in the King Features newspaper comic strip* Thimble Theatre. *The writer-artist who created the character, Elzie Crisler Segar, was born in Chester, Illinois, today the site of the annual Popeye Picnic, a gala festival celebrating the legacy of Segar and his characters. Former Charlton Comics editor George Wildman and Charlton artist Hy Eisman were the Popeye Fanclub's guests of honor at the 2009 Picnic, both being long professionally involved with Segar's characters. George illustrated the* Popeye *comic books for Charlton and later Western (Gold Key and Whitman) from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, while Hy (writer-artist of* The Katzenjammer Kids *newspaper strip since 1986) succeeded Bud Sagendorf on the Sunday* Popeye *strip in 1994.*

The year 2009 was one of coincidental anniversaries for these gentlemen as well. George celebrated the 40th anniversary of both his employment as a Charlton editor and the commencement of his tenure on Popeye. *Hy was completing his 15th year as the* Popeye *newspaper artist. Both prolific cartoonists agreed to participate in an interview for* Charlton Spotlight *on Saturday, September 12, 2009. The mood was light and laughter was abundant since the motel room "studio" was populated with friends.*

Below and opposite: George Wildman expounds and Hy Eisman elaborates. All interview photos of George and Hy herein are taken from video by Donnie Pitchford, with still captures produced by Kyle Cage. Many thanks, Donnie and Kyle. All photos © 2011 Donnie Pitchford.



My friendship with George started 40 years ago as a teenage fan reacting to his work in Charlton's Popeye *#108 with its lead feature, "The Story of Popeye," in which writer Joe Gill provided the script to a brief history of Elzie Segar and his immortal creations. I thank George and Trudy Wildman, Hy and Florenz Eisman, Mike and Debbie Brooks of the Popeye Fanclub, my wife Laura, and friends Sam Brown, Chuck Anders, and Leonard Kohl for assisting in the production of this interview, which was also produced as a multicamera video.*

—Donnie Pitchford

PITCHFORD: Let me start with a message from an old friend. This is from Nick Cuti. He wrote me and said, "Tell George I'm leaving for Rochester, New York on Wednesday to see my old buddy, John Tagg from Charlton." [***Ed. note:*** *John Tagg worked in Charlton's distribution arm, Capital Distributing Co., and was best man at Nick Cuti's wedding.*]

WILDMAN: Oh, sure!

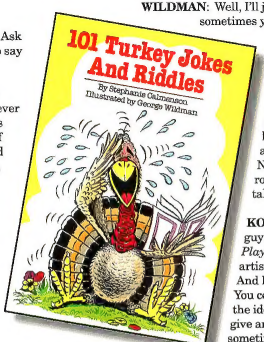
PITCHFORD: "George knows John. Ask George if he has anything he wants to say to John."

WILDMAN: John Tagg, I don't know what you're doing up there, but whatever it is, I wish you well and it was always a pleasure knowing you and I think of you quite often when I think of the old Charlton days. Good luck and thanks, Nick.

PITCHFORD: Do you want to say anything to Nick?

WILDMAN: Oh, God, yeah. I can't keep up with Nick where he's involved. He always e-mails me with a listing of all these people his letters go to and it's a page of names. He tells us what he's up to in his film productions and different enterprises he has going, and I imagine he's a pretty busy fellow and I wish him well. Obviously, he's doing well. Just keep it up!

PITCHFORD: Lenny had a question, since we're on the subject of Nick Cuti.



101 Turkey Jokes and Riddles, with text by Stephanie Calmenson, is an early example of George's post-Charlton freelance work. Scan courtesy of Donnie Pitchford. © 1988 Weekly Reader Books.

LEONARD KOHL: George, I know when a writer and an artist work together, sometimes the writer has some artistic ability. I was wondering if Nick would actually sketch out some of the ways he thought the characters might move when he put his word balloons where he wanted them. Did you two work out a system that way?

WILDMAN: Well, I'll just say in one hunk of that question, sometimes yes, it's good, and sometimes it's bad when a writer indicates layouts or thoughts, on certain pages, because as an artist, you don't want to get hung up on what he said. Usually, if I sit down with just a script and empty pages, and then I go at it by myself, I'm not influenced by any previous thoughts. But yeah, at other times—and particularly with Nick—I would accept his graphics or rough layouts, because he is a double talent as an artist and a writer.

KOHL: I wondered that because the guys who did *Little Annie Fanny* for *Playboy*, Harvey Kurtzman—a great artist as he was—he did the writing. And Bill Elder did the finished product. You could see Kurtzman would rough out the ideas and I'm sure there was a lot of give and take. I just wondered if you liked, sometimes, somebody giving you ideas and maybe you said, "That's nice, but I'm going to move him over here."

WILDMAN: I can clarify that. Earlier in my career, when I was a novice, when I was coming up in the ranks, many times I'd hang my hat on rough layouts because I thought, "Hey, this guy's

My Boss, George Wildman

Nicola Cuti

Nick Cuti receives a well-deserved Inkpot award at the 2009 San Diego Comic-Con International. Photo courtesy of and © 2011 Nicola Cuti.

I first met George in New York City, where he was to interview me for the position as his assistant at Charlton Comics. I had gotten stuck in incredibly slow moving city traffic, a block every half an hour, and ended up being two hours late for our meeting. I thought for certain he had either left or would refuse to even see me. Instead he made a joke about my tardiness and told me to report to work as soon as I was settled in Connecticut.

Less than a week later I began my duties as his assistant and discovered that besides being editor, George was also the artist on *Popeye*. He has a very unique style of drawing with a brush stroke that is so controlled and clean it amazes me. I watched him ink once and saw how he held his brush hand cradled in his free hand, much the way I had been taught to shoot a revolver in the military. So, that was how he could achieve such steadiness. I tried his technique but I was never able to equal his skill, and to this day I rarely ink my own pencils.

George also used to have a little trick of working his son's name, Karl, into each of the *Popeye* covers. You can imagine how thrilled I was when, on the day I left Charlton, George presented me with an original *Popeye* cover with my name rendered into the artwork along with his son's name.

I have worked for many bosses since my tenure at Charlton, but George remains in my mind as one of the best.

got a good idea, and I'll embellish it or I'll build on it." And yet, later in my career when I was more established in that area of the graphics, I would sometimes not want to be influenced like I said previously by anybody else's thoughts when I'm laying it out.

KOHL: I'd like to ask the same question of Hy. Have you ever worked with collaborators where you guys fought over things, where maybe you worked the system out?

EISMAN: No, I always assumed that it was a suggestion on the part of the writer who left it up to me to make the decision whether to use it or not. When using a storyboard, rather than a typed script, I felt that the writer understood that there was a limit to how much I could write in a panel and what character would be speaking first, and so forth. So I sort of welcomed them. A storyboard would be very rough, but he indicated who's going to speak first, who's going to speak second, so he showed that he had a knowledge of what a comic book page should be.

WILDMAN: I'll say too that many writers would give us license. They would say, if they had sketched something, "Don't hold yourself to this. You do what you want." And on the other hand, as Hy is saying, many writers are verbal-artistic-graphic people, in the sense they can do it with words. You put it all together and you're going to have a good story.

PITCHFORD: Would each of you state briefly how you became involved with Charlton Comics? We can start with Hy. What did you do for the company? How did you become aware of it?

EISMAN: It had to be circa 1962, '63, since I had just left *Kerry Drake*. I was ghosting a strip called *Kerry Drake* for Alfred Andriola and Alfred went back to doing the strip himself, or a part of it. We won't go into the Alfred Andriola story. [*audience chuckles*] That's another book. I was left without any work. It was at a time when comic books were still suffering from the Wertham saga [***Ed. note:*** *Dr. Fredric Wertham's 1954 book* Seduction of the Innocent *and related events greatly affected the direction of the comic book industry.*] and I got a call from a friend, saying that an inker for Charlton was looking for pencilers, and it turned out to be Vinnie Colletta. I checked with him. He was working in Jersey City at the time on Pavonia Avenue. I went down with a portfolio and Vinnie told me he could handle all the pencils I could produce. I remembered, from

my early experience, to ask, "Oh, yeah. What's the rate?" [*chuckles*] And he said, "It's seven bucks." [*audience laughs again*] I said, "Seven bucks per panel?" I figured seven bucks a panel, six panels on a page—forty bucks, all right. And he said, "No, that's the page rate." [*audience chuckles once more*] I said, "How many can you handle?" And he said, "I can handle as many as you can put out. I can ink 70 pages a week," which was true. I said, "In order to be able to just come up with ten pages a day, how could I—?" And he explained that you do close-ups, a lot of close-ups; and he taught me if a woman is crying, just put a giant eye with a tear coming out. [*audience chuckles*] I was able to produce seven pages a day over a period of time. I guess I worked for Vinnie for about three years until something that paid money came along. But I didn't sign anything. That was one of the great virtues of that. But Vinnie collected penciled pages from some of the best names in the industry at seven dollars a page. And those names I won't mention because they're stars today. [*chuckles*]

PITCHFORD: I've got some visual aids here. These are three pages I was told are Hy Eisman pages. [*Donnie hands three original* Blondie *pages to George, who passes them to Hy*] And now, the moment of truth is at hand. If they're not Hy Eisman pages, I'm gonna go punch somebody out.

EISMAN: They're not Hy Eisman pages. [*audience laughs again*]

WILDMAN: They could be Paul Fung.

EISMAN: Yeah, this is Paul Fung. Yeah, absolutely.

PITCHFORD: Okay, I've always wanted to know, and now I know.

WILDMAN: He was a good man too.

EISMAN: Paul Fung's father did *Polly and Her Pals*.

WILDMAN: Yeah, that's it.

EISMAN: He ghosted it.

PITCHFORD: Can you ghost Paul Fung's signature? I'll hand you this pen. [*everyone laughs*] Well, I thought they were nice pages.

EISMAN: They are.

EISMAN: You think these are Charlton?

WILDMAN: Sure, why not?

PITCHFORD: That's what I'm told.

EISMAN: No, it would be Harvey.

WILDMAN: [*George examines the pages*] Oh, I'll tell you now, we never punched our pages. No, we didn't.

PITCHFORD: But check the Comics Code Authority stamp on the back.

WILDMAN: Jeez, it looks like a Charlton. Here's the stamp for the Comics Code, for Lenny Darvin's signature.

PITCHFORD: 1969, isn't it?

WILDMAN: But maybe all of them had a stamp from the Comics Code.

PITCHFORD: You know what it may be, those may be some of the pages that were left over from King. [***Ed. note:*** *King Features supplied such inventory material and stipulated it be published by Charlton, which explains the appearance of some Bud Sagendorf pages among those by George in Charlton's* Popeye *#100.*]

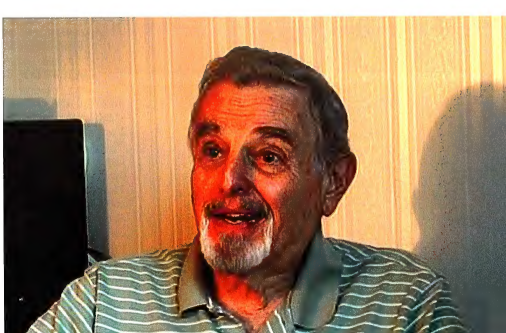
WILDMAN: Somebody punched these holes.

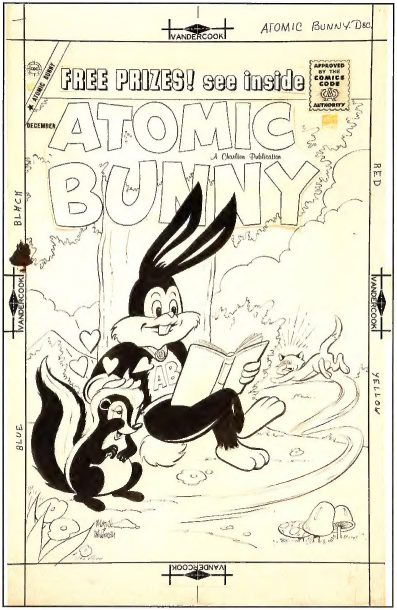
PITCHFORD: Uh-huh, I thought that was unusual.

WILDMAN: But Paul was excellent on *Blondie*.

EISMAN: He only did it for Harvey and all Harvey's stuff is in some warehouse, somewhere in California.

PITCHFORD: But George, didn't Charlton also publish *Blondie*?





An early Charlton George Wildman cover, in collaboration with then–Charlton Comics editor Pat Masulli: ***Atomic Bunny*** #19 (Dec. 1959). From the original art, courtesy Heritage Comics Auctions *(www.ha.com)*. © Charlton Comics Group.

WILDMAN: True.

PITCHFORD: Okay, so maybe that was some leftover art that was held and then published.

WILDMAN: Well, one of our books we did in the Popeye Educational series was *Blondie*. I know Paul did it.

EISMAN: Did Paul do it for Charlton?

WILDMAN: Yeah. Oh, sure.

HY: Oh!

KOHL: I was wondering, Hy, since you'd been doing comic strips for so many years, was it a rough transition to go from comic strips to comic books? Because you've got to do a story and build out the plot a lot more than for a comic strip.

EISMAN: Well, I wrote Archie stories, but I never wrote anything but comic art so the transition wasn't difficult. I actually learned to do Sunday pages working with Bob Dunn on *Little Iodine* and he had that facility coming up. Yeah, they used a term for him, "He could piss gags." [*cell phone rings in the background*] And he had that ability, just to pour stuff out and—what is that?

PITCHFORD: I don't know, somebody's playing a concert over there.

KOHL: Okay, it's my wife on the phone.

EISMAN: Oh, it's your wife. She has a beautiful voice. [*audience laughs*]

KOHL: Thank you, I'll tell her that. I'll be right back.

PITCHFORD: So far, we haven't had to edit a thing.

WILDMAN: Did you want to know how I started at Charlton? [*addresses Hy*] We got way off base here.

EISMAN: Yeah, yeah.

PITCHFORD: Yes, yes, yes, keep it short. Keep it simple. [*chuckles again*] Go ahead!

WILDMAN: In 1969. That's it. [*audience laughs once more*]

PITCHFORD: Thank you very much.

WILDMAN: In the 1960s, prior to Charlton, I had my own art studio. My career was in advertising and I did a lot of work with that because my background, starting as a professional artist, was in ad agencies, and I worked my way up. Finally, I opened my own agency. Things were going nicely, and then I started having a problem with my health. It turned out I had polyps in my nose and up in my sinuses. And at the same time I got that word, I lost my major account, which was a big sporting goods company in the New Haven area. They were international, Seamless Rubber Company. They were moving to the west coast and they wanted me to go with them, and I said no. Even if it wasn't because of my health, I said I didn't want to. Business would pick up again. I'd get more accounts when I could. So I wound up in the hospital, flat on my back, looking at the ceiling, thinking, "Where the heck am I going now?" I got an offer from Charlton because I had done some freelance for them starting in the late '50s for their comic book division, fill-in stories. You know, fillers. And they made me an offer: Would I take a position as assistant editor? The advertising business, believe me, is a rat race.

The planners have it, the management has it, and they all work on it. When they make up their mind, they call in advertising and they say, "When can we have it?"

EISMAN: Yesterday.

We printed this photo of George last issue, but not in color—and it's just too good not to use again. From the filmstrip accompanying the 1975 King Features Syndicate educational booklet ***People at Work: The Comic Book,*** George and friend conduct Charlton business. Screen capture courtesy of Donnie Pitchford. Photo and Popeye TM & © 2011 KFS.

WILDMAN: Or on Friday, "Can we see it Monday morning?" I say, "It's Christmas tomorrow." "Then we'll see it the day after," and so on. [*audience chuckles*] Trudy was very helpful, and she said, "Why not? If this is a chance to get out of that business." I loved cartooning. I did a lot of cartooning for agencies, so I told Charlton I'd take it. And then I said, "But the price is low on the salary," and so they said, "Would you like to take the *Popeye* strip? King Features has called us and we need a *Popeye* artist. You want to submit samples?" So I did. I submitted samples; King okayed them, so I had all systems go. With King's money and Charlton's meager amount, I had a living. And that's how I started at Charlton. It worked out well over the years. But when I took over as editor, they were paying $6.50 a page for artwork.

EISMAN: For complete?

WILDMAN: Complete pages.

EISMAN: Oh, I was doing well. [*audience laughs*]

WILDMAN: You were. When I heard you, I thought, "You got a deal, boy." That was for pencil, ink, and letter. Pencil, ink, and letter!

PITCHFORD: This is what this young man looked like at his drawing board. You know what I'm showing? [*Donnie shows George, then Hy, a sheet of original artwork, a self-portrait of George from* Popeye *#108, June 1971; see page 9*] You remember this?

WILDMAN: [*chuckles*] Yeah, I think so. Yeah, I'm sure, yep.

EISMAN: Oh, I've seen reproductions of that, yeah. Who'd you use as a model here, George? [*audience chuckles again*]

WILDMAN: As editor, I determined Joe Gill was our in-house writer. If you know comics, you know Joe Gill. You could say, "We need six pages in an hour, Joe," and you had it. That's how fast he could write, and he would write well, too. It wouldn't be garbage. He was amazing.

PITCHFORD: Do you have a favorite memory about Joe?

WILDMAN: Yeah, when I hired Nick Cuti. [*audience laughs*] When I hired Nick Cuti, and God bless you Joe, I know, but you'd tell the truth if you were here too. He got worried because this Nick was also a writer, so right away, he said, [*grumbles*] "Hi, Nick. How are you?" [*audience chuckles*] You know, he was cool toward him, because Nick had the same deal I did. I had to give him the same deal. "You can still do freelance writing as long as you can handle your job as editor." And it all worked out good with Joe and Nick.

PITCHFORD: And what about after Nick left? You had Bill Pearson, who also wrote.

We also printed this photo of chief Charlton Comics writer Joe Gill last issue, but let's see it again, shall we? Also from the ***People at Work: The Comic Book*** booklet. Photo © 2011 KFS.

WILDMAN: I forget how Bill came in. Maybe Nick recommended him. I'm going to have to go back to "Why did you hire Nick?" Number one at the time when I took the editor's chair, I realized I was probably the least capable editor as far as knowing good comic art, and super-heroes, and all the comics, because my career was advertising. And so Nick was an asset to me in the sense I wouldn't know which was more important. I think he was more an asset to me as a writer than as an artist.

EISMAN: Yeah.

WILDMAN: Because I had some great names under my hand, like Steve Ditko. A lot of those names now are giants, but in those days, those guys, at just four or five or six dollars a page, they got published and they could show Marvel and DC and so on. We were a step along the way for a lot of them.

EISMAN: But no one was allowed to sign it.

PITCHFORD: Hy, did you do any work when George was editor up at Charlton?

EISMAN: Oh, I was working at Charlton. Through Vinnie, I was doing the penciling. But this was all love comics. I knew about the *Popeye* book, but by that time I wouldn't even take a chance to send up samples on *Popeye*. Somebody else was doing the *Popeye* book. That was it. [*audience chuckles*]

WILDMAN: [*points to himself with a smile*] Especially when I was the editor. [*laughs again*]

EISMAN: I didn't know you were the editor, and I didn't know who was doing it at the time. [*chuckles*]

WILDMAN: We didn't know each other then.

PITCHFORD: I'm curious about the fire that took place near your office. [*shows George, then Hy, a piece of original art; see* Charlton Spotlight *#6, page 60*]

WILDMAN: Oh, yeah.

PITCHFORD: There was a fire, and you lettered a note on there that in 1979 you found that 1976 sketch and cleaned the soot off . Can you tell us what happened with that fire?

WILDMAN: The fire was in the bowling alley, right, Trudy?

TRUDY WILDMAN: Right.

WILDMAN: Santangelo [***Ed. note:*** *Charlton Press founder and publisher John Santangelo*], this was his empire and there was this big building we were in at this time, but they moved comics out of the main building over to this building. It was also a bowling alley. So about one-third of it was comics, and two-thirds, if not more, was the bowling alleys. And then one night, for some reason, it caught fire, but the flames and everything didn't get into the comic division. But through the ventilation, we filled up with smoke and soot and for almost ten, fifteen days, we had the cleaners in there, cleaning up. We came out of it all right, but it was pretty bad for a couple or three weeks.

PITCHFORD: It's a strange coincidence. I actually called you to do a phone interview that day and you said, "I can't talk to you now. We've got a fire. I'll have to call you later." *Click!* [*audience chuckles*] [***Ed. note:*** *The fire is referred to as "recent" in Donnie's letter to George dated July 16, 1979. In George's reply of November 5, 1979, he writes, "At last we're clean—soot free that is!! Took all this time but finally we're back to normal."*]

WILDMAN: Right!

PITCHFORD: I remember thinking, "What? Gee whiz." So I've never known the details behind the fire.

EISMAN: I never saw a deadline this long. [*audience laughs again*] This was drawn in 1976 and you didn't have to have it lettered 'til '79.

PITCHFORD: How about that?

EISMAN: That's fabulous.

Again from the 1975 booklet ***People at Work: The Comic Book*** and also used last issue and too good not to see again in color, George inks his chin (see page 10). Photo © 2011 KFS.

KOHL: Wow, you can't beat it.

PITCHFORD: In other words, he found it on the floor and said, "I'll send it to that kid in Texas." That's what he did. *[chuckles]*

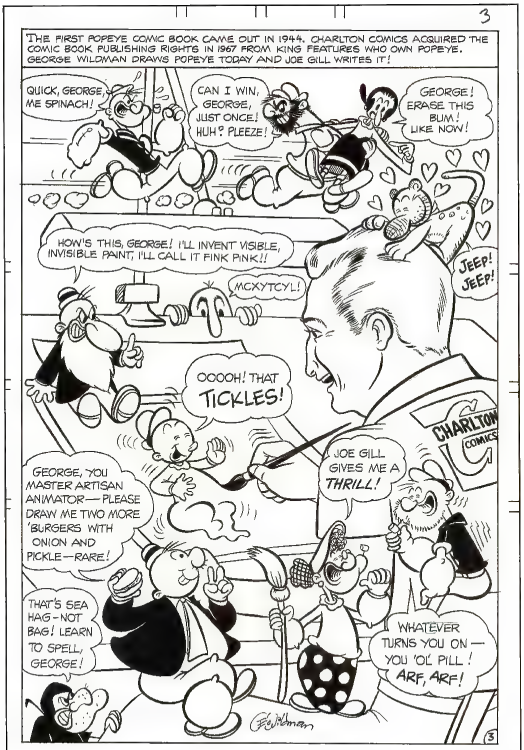
WILDMAN: Yeah! *[hands the artwork back to Donnie]* Later, I had quite a nice career with *Highlights Magazine for Children*, and they worked five years ahead. *[Hy laughs]* So they gave me the channel I was going to be working in and just told me to keep sending the art. That was nice.

KOHL: So in other words, when my son is old enough to read it five years from now, maybe some of your stuff will be in there. *[chuckles]* Ah, well.

WILDMAN: Sure, that's exactly right, because they have cut back now on *Highlights*. Like a lot of industries, they had to cut back. Downsizing? And they must have fifty or sixty drawings of mine ahead because we worked that far ahead all the time. In fact, when I get back home from this trip, which I'm totally enjoying, I've been invited to the annual picnic up at *Highlights*. It's in upstate Pennsylvania and they're so nice. I've never worked for people like them. Three days.

EISMAN: I'll come with you. *[audience laughs once more]*

WILDMAN: Yeah, three or four days up there, and all of their facilities, and at no cost to me except my gas. My shtick was the hidden objects, the pages with the hidden objects. That's what I do.


3
THE FIRST POPEYE COMIC BOOK CAME OUT IN 1944. CHARLTON COMICS ACQUIRED THE COMIC BOOK PUBLISHING RIGHTS IN 1967 FROM KING FEATURES WHO OWN POPEYE. GEORGE WILDMAN DRAWS POPEYE TODAY AND JOE GILL WRITES IT!
QUICK, GEORGE, ME SPINACH!
CAN I WIN, GEORGE, JUST ONCE! HUH? PLEEZE!
GEORGE! ERASE THIS BUM! LIKE NOW!
HOW'S THIS, GEORGE! I'LL INVENT VISIBLE, INVISIBLE PAINT; I'LL CALL IT PINK PINK!!
MCKYTCY!
JEEP! JEEP!
OOOOH! THAT TICKLES!
CHARLTON COMICS
GEORGE, YOU MASTER ARTISAN ANIMATOR— PLEASE DRAW ME TWO MORE 'BURGERS WITH ONION AND PICKLE—RARE!
JOE GILL GIVES ME A THRILL!
THAT'S SEA HAG - NOT BAG! LEARN TO SPELL, GEORGE!
WHATEVER TURNS YOU ON— YOU 'OL' PILL! ARF, ARF!
3

George surrounded by the characters he loves, from page 3 of the original art to "The Story of Popeye" in Charlton's ***Popeye*** #108 (June 1971), courtesy of Donnie Pitchford. Popeye TM & © 2011 KFS

PITCHFORD: Tell us a little bit about the physical layout of the Charlton bullpen when the comic division was in the main plant and how that changed when you went to the bowling alley.

WILDMAN: Not really too much. It was the same amount of people. At the bowling alley and even in the main office, it was one huge room. You were over there and I was over here. Here, I'm the editor and you're this. And we did our own color separations. We had five girls working on separations, that's what the comic division was.

EISMAN: Yeah.

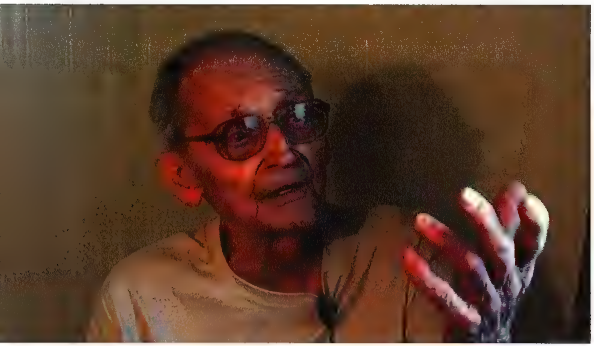
WILDMAN: We didn't have a bullpen in-house. Everything was freelanced out.

EISMAN: Who handled that typewriter?

PITCHFORD: "A. Machine."

WILDMAN: Yeah, "A. Machine." The Old Man, again, our little Italian emperor over there, he decided, "I'm-a not gonna pay this. We make-a a machine." [*audience laughs again*] And the next thing you know, he had a lettering machine. But a lot of readers hated it.

PITCHFORD: [*handing the men a notebook*] Those are some images of the Charlton plant from the educational



booklet and film strip that King put out called *People at Work: The Comic Book*. If anything jumps out at you—

WILDMAN: That's me. [*points to a picture of himself*] That handsome—

EISMAN: I see that. [*audience chuckles*] "Thinking!"

WILDMAN: [*chuckles*] Inking my chin. [*audience laughs once more*]

PITCHFORD: Something may jump out at you here.

WILDMAN: I'll tell you this, guys. We kid about Donnie and me, but he was one of my first fans. Really, when he was a young kid down in Texas, he wrote to me and my secretary Greta [Klimas] said, "You've got a fan letter here." It was the start of my fans, and he is responsible for King Features having a 50th anniversary *Popeye* issue because he called me like five months ahead and said, "Mr. Wildman, do you realize that Popeye's anniversary is coming up in five months?" And I think I said, "Oh, sure!" [*audience laughs again*]

KOHL: "Of course I do, young man!"

WILDMAN: But I did thank him, I know that.

PITCHFORD: It's because I called him "Mister," he was nice to me. [*Hy chuckles*]

WILDMAN: So then I told my company, the Old Man. All you had to say to the Old Man was, "We can make money on this." "Oh, that's a good idea!" [*audience laughs again*] So then I called King Features and I said the same thing to them. "In five months, do you know it's Popeye's anniversary?" And they said, "No." [*audience chuckles*] King Features, I'm talking to! And this is how personable they were. But the next thing you know, they say, "We're going to do a 50th anniversary issue." I said, "Wonderful," and I'm thinking, "When do I start?" And they said, "We're using Bud Sagendorf," because Bud was still alive then and I always had a warm spot for Bud, too, because he was always handy for information when I was doing Popeye, because he was Segar's assistant. It's like getting the word from the horse's mouth. But that's how Donnie and I met, and I give him full credit to this day for King Features putting out a 50th anniversary issue. [***Ed. note:*** *Bud Sagendorf's book* Popeye: The First Fifty Years *was published in 1979 by Workman Press. Bill Pearson scripted "Popeye's Birthday Party," a 22 page comic book story illustrated by George Wildman, which appeared in* Popeye the Sailor *#144 (Mar. 1979). Although this comic was published by Western under its Gold Key imprint, George still promoted both Popeye and Charlton Comics when making personal appearances.*]

PITCHFORD: I'm still waiting for the royalty check.

WILDMAN: Yeah, don't hang around. [*audience laughs once more*]

PITCHFORD: What about your daily routine when you were an editor? Was it a set routine, day-to-day? Did you do any art at the office or was that all in your home?

WILDMAN: Let's look at a given week. You see, Charlton Press was humongous in size. It was like six acres under one roof, one floor. One part of it had two floors and we had our own ballroom for when we had a Christmas party, or when someone was getting married, the company would offer it. I don't know how little they charged. [*audience chuckles again*] Everything was under one roof. Joe Gill was the only writer on staff. We also had a magazine division and they put out a lot of magazines. Boy, they were doing great at that. But anyway, it made it nice. We had all our engravers there, and we had our presses, and everything right out to shipping. We shipped to everywhere east of the Mississippi. Beyond that the books went other ways. So in a given week, Monday morning was always a staff meeting and that involved guys from the press room, from engraving, from the comics, from magazines and so on, and reviewing what we're doing, what management was doing, what was coming up, and what was on the schedule then. We had our own sales force, they were in there too. Charlton Publications handled it all from publishing to distribution, and that was it. Then the rest of the week, you were pretty much on your own, getting all the work done in your own division, keeping all your own coordinates going, scripts going out, art coming in, coordinating the books. We had almost 50 books in our line so I was editor, at one time, of, say, 50 comics. And it kept me going because within comics, we had humor, we had romance, we had adventure, we had western, and on and on. We had seven or eight categories of comics and that's where I used a lot of good artists like, [*to Hy*] did you know Frank Bolle?

EISMAN: Yeah, absolutely.

WILDMAN: Yeah, and he's a good friend of mine today. I see him at the meetings we have of the Connecticut Artists and Writers.

EISMAN: Yeah, Frank is still working, doing comics.

WILDMAN: God, he's 86. I didn't realize. He looks the same.

EISMAN: And still doing *Apartment 3-G*.

WILDMAN: Right, and so as I say, I met a lot of people in my life. Consequently, I'd go once a week into New York where we had an office and a lot of artists would come into the city and it was nice for them. They didn't have to come up to Connecticut for assignments. They'd come down from Rochester or in from Chicago—not Hawaii, but anyway . . . [*audience chuckles once more*] And then we could have our conferences. So I would go in to New York and I would deal with King Features in person, Hanna-Barbera, and so on, and I was still at Charlton when the ship started going down. The Old Man had died and a new man was at the helm, and this started things going down. There was nobody now to save it. A couple of times, he [Santangelo Sr.] had bailed it out. He could always write the check and get it back going again. I won't get into details, but you could smell something was going on. I didn't like the smell of it. And so when I stepped out of Charlton, I stepped right into New York and could call on all these people I dealt with, including Random House, Field Publishing. And before I

Bill Pearson's latest work is the funny and entertaining novel ***Dancing Partners***, jacket art by Richard Bassford. Available online from Amazon, B&N, or directly from the publisher, *www.xlibris.com/DancingPartners.html*.

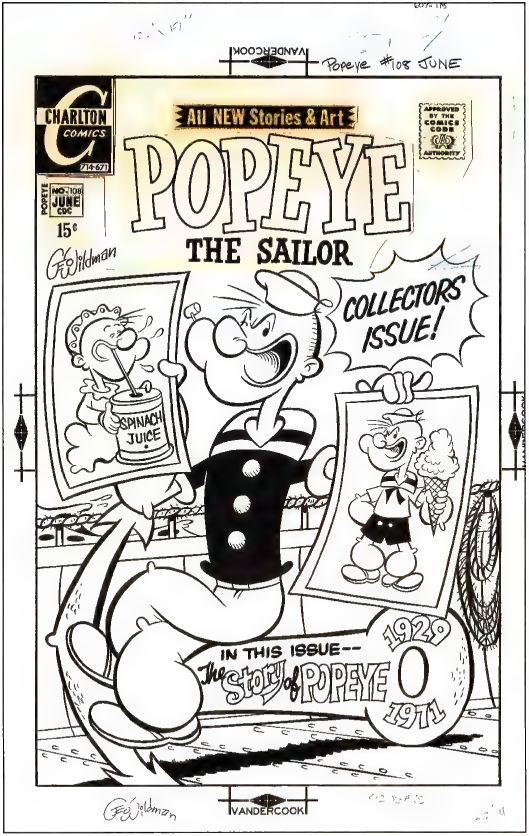
George Wildman

Bill Pearson

A good administrator at Charlton, George was capable of making quick decisions and securing the cooperation of his staff without being a bully. He was cheerful by nature and kept the comics department humming along productively for years.

Although George was my boss at Charlton, he never pulled rank concerning our freelance account, producing the *Popeye* comic book for Western Publishing. We had some terrific arguments, but both of us were trying to make the stories as good as possible, so our differences were resolved without any lingering resentment. I gained a lot of respect for his talent during that period and marveled at his speed, both penciling and inking.

I'm proud of our *Popeye* comics, treasure the memories of my years at Charlton, and feel privileged to have known the distinguished George Wildman.



The original, iconic cover art to ***Popeye*** #108 (June 1971), scan courtesy of Donnie Pitchford. Popeye TM & © 2011 KFS.

knew it, within a week, I had assignments as if nothing ever happened to me. And then you say to yourself, "It's one of those things, I should have done it ten years ago."

EISMAN: Right.

PITCHFORD: Nick Cuti wrote for Charlton, and wrote *Popeye* for you. When you started doing the *Popeye* comics for Western, Bill Pearson wrote the scripts. Kind of feeding off of Lenny's question, what was that working relationship like with Bill, as far as how those scripts were handled? Did he do any rough layouts, any thumbnails?

WILDMAN: Well, both of them deviated from what the comics were at Charlton, and even with *Popeye*. Joe Gill's style was six or eight stories in the book; five, six, four, three pages. Nick and Bill liked to do a whole story, book-length, and I kind of liked that too, as the artist, because you could spend more time on it. You didn't have to come up with six opening pages. You could take a nice chronological walk through the book and that was a big change. And the fans liked it. Many fans commented they liked this new approach. And Nick, he was good too. He could give constructive criticism to scripts that came in, as well as his own work, dealing with me. And I gave him a free hand for writing *Popeye*, and the same with Bill Pearson. And Bill was an artist too.

PITCHFORD: Didn't he do your lettering also?

WILDMAN: He did, yeah. He lettered all the *Popeye* work.

PITCHFORD: What about some of the other personalities? I don't want to say we've got a ghost in the room—we have one of the ghost artists in the room who has done a great deal of work and I was going to show you a couple of Sagendorfs that you may not have seen. [*hands George and Hy some art pages*] That's some of Bud Sagendorf's work, and Hy, when you took over the *Popeye* newspaper strip, were you asked to ghost Sagendorf and actually sign his name at first?

EISMAN: Yes, they thought he just had gotten ill and they called on a Friday, as a matter of fact, and said, "He's very, very close to his deadline. Can you just do a Sunday page over the weekend?"

PITCHFORD: I'll show this to George. [*Donnie hands George another page*] This is one of Hy's.

EISMAN: So the first one that I had done, Sagendorf's signature was in the logo panel and I actually didn't sign it. It just wasn't signed.

WILDMAN: I think this is Sagendorf here, isn't it? [*pointing to the logo panel*]

EISMAN: That's Sagendorf's logo.

KOHL: Did you have to imitate his exact drawing style?

EISMAN: I did. I imitated him exactly and I had some Sagendorf originals that I'd gotten. I had traded with him for a *Little Iodine*, which was nice because nobody else knew *Little Iodine* but Sagendorf and he was willing to trade.

WILDMAN: [*chuckles*] I remember. Yeah, I remember.

EISMAN: So that's why it looked like a Sagendorf Sunday page, yeah.

WILDMAN: You see, these are nice. [*points to areas on Hy's artwork*] I like the layouts here, this break-out here and so on. I like your silhouette and this is the difference between this and that too. [*points to Sagendorf's art*]

PITCHFORD: So George, if you had to hire him to ghost Bud Sagendorf, you'd do it.

WILDMAN: Oh, sure. This is an improvement.

EISMAN: I'm sitting next to him; of course he's going to say yes! [*audience laughs again*] I can reach over and hit him, for crying out loud!

PITCHFORD: But what I need to know, Hy, is do you think George could ghost Segar? [*passes to Hy the original artwork of George's 1971 recreation of Elzie Segar's first published drawing of Popeye*]

EISMAN: Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

PITCHFORD: What do you think about that? Do you think George had that ability?

EISMAN: Ah, yeah. Jeez.

PITCHFORD: Isn't that nice?

WILDMAN: [*chuckles once more*] In fact, King advised that I visit Sagendorf when I took over the comic book and Bud lived right in Westport, Connecticut. It was 20 minutes for me to go down to visit with him. He filled me in on all of his characters. I said, "How about Barnacle Bill, the Sailor?" I remember that, when I was a kid, reading it.

EISMAN: Yeah, yeah.

WILDMAN: He said Segar only used him in about two stories and he got rid of him. But funny, all the years, that character stuck with me.

EISMAN: Because it was a song too, called—

EISMAN AND WILDMAN: "Barnacle Bill, the Sailor."

EISMAN: Right.

KOHL: There's even a Max Fleischer *Popeye* cartoon where they used the song and it's like an opera. It's just great.

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WILL BE PRESENT DISPLAYING ORIGINAL COMICBOOK MATERIAL. HE IS THE WRITER AND ARTIST WHO DOES PEPPER COMICS AND THE NEW ADVENTURES OF CHARLTON COMICS. SEE WILDMAN TO WELCOME TO GEORGE WILDMAN.
WE REGRET TO ANNOUNCE THE
CANCELLATION OF GEORGE Pal..
DUE TO UNFORESEEN DIFFICULTIES.
PAT BOYETTE
Spookman
Fred Himes

Boy, this must have been some con! Where's that time machine when you need it?! Scan from ***The Buyer's Guide to Comic Fandom*** (now ***Comics Buyer's Guide***), courtesy of Donnie Pitchford. © 2011 Krause Publications.

WILDMAN: Yeah.

KOHL: Speaking about Bud Sagendorf, apparently he used to sleep during the day and work at night, and I guess that's the way Segar worked.

EISMAN: Most cartoonists did.

KOHL: I was wondering if that caused a problem with you working with him.

WILDMAN: No, no, no, I didn't work that close, ever. I would call him when I needed help, I'd give him a buzz and he'd fill me in on the corners I was weak on, about whatever the situation was. A little vignette about the early days of Segar and Sagendorf was that when Sagendorf—I don't know if they were in Chicago or the West Coast or in the New York area. [***Ed note:*** *They actually were working in Santa Monica, California.*] But they'd be working during the day and Segar would say, "Bud, you ready for a break?" "I'm ready for a break." "Well, let's go fishing." So they'd go fishing and Segar said to him, "Give me a name." —What's A-E-I-O-U? What are those?

EISMAN AND AUDIENCE: Vowels.

WILDMAN: Vowels. That's it, vowels! [*audience chuckles again*] What a good name. [*George and Hy chuckle*] But anyway, he would ask Bud to give him two vowels. Bud gave him a double-E. Well, next he suggested, "Let's put a 'J' on the front, put a 'P' on the end." And they'd bounce it back and forth while they were fishing and they came up with "Jeep." Nobody at King said anything. They'd come back in two hours after fishing—this was another era, okay?

EISMAN: Yeah, yeah.

WILDMAN: But that's how they worked. A lot of things, like "Goon," came that way. Double vowel in the middle.

KOHL: Which are words we still use today.

WILDMAN: It's in the dictionary, right. Two words. They used to say two natural things came out of the United States. One was jazz and the other one was comics, the world of comics.

EISMAN: Right, right.

PITCHFORD: Did you work with John Wren in the Charlton days? [***Ed. note:*** *John Wren succeeded Bill Pearson at Charlton as George's assistant editor in 1982.*]

WILDMAN: Oh, sure.

PITCHFORD: What was he like? [*George chuckles*] Next question! [*audience laughs again*]

WILDMAN: Next question! John came out of the Sixties, the roaring era of the Sixties, anti-Establishment, a maverick.

EISMAN: Yes, I was a member of that group. [*audience laughs again*]

WILDMAN: Yeah, well, I wasn't, but I learned. [*audience laughs once more*]

EISMAN: Charlton could turn you into one of those.

WILDMAN: Yeah, right. But hey, when I got through with Charlton, they were getting almost ninety bucks a page.

EISMAN: Oh, God. [*chuckles*]

WILDMAN: They gained by me being the editor, because I'd tell the Old Man, "You can't pay these men bah dah dah dah." So he would say, "Well, we'll come up three dollars." [*audience laughs*]

PITCHFORD: You bankrupted them, eh?

WILDMAN: Yeah.

PITCHFORD: What about the general atmosphere? Was it just another job? Were there tedious times? Were there fun times?

WILDMAN: There were. Threre was, of course, a camaraderie that was in the building. Everybody worked for nothing. [*looks at Hy, audience laughs again*] The Old Man, it was his nature when they were adding on a building, they'd have the contractors out there, he'd go out there and grab a trowel. [*audience laughs once more as George pantomimes troweling mortar*] He knew how fast you were supposed to lay brick.

EISMAN: That's right. [*chuckles*] And he wanted to let them know.

WILDMAN: "You're not-a doin' this, you move!"

EISMAN: Tell them about the air conditioning in the trucks.

WILDMAN: Oh, yeah. When our drivers, they were at the meeting too, they wanted air conditioning in the trucks and the Old Man'd say, "Lower the windows." [*audience laughs*]

PITCHFORD: Oh, boy.

WILDMAN: He was right. [*audience laughs once more*]

PITCHFORD: What about some of the artists, the free-lancers? How many of them came to the plant to deliver their work? Did guys like Steve Ditko come in to deliver and visit?

WILDMAN: Steve Ditko—anybody that's dealt with Ditko would know this—is a very quiet, unassuming guy. And if he's a millionaire today, he's still quiet and unassuming. You'd never know it. I walked into the New York office one time and I said to our girl, "Betty, I'm here to meet Steve Ditko." And she said, "He's sitting right there." [*audience laughs again*] I said, "Oh, Steve." He says, "Oh, you're George?" "Yeah," and so on. He was a nice guy. But no, a lot of guys didn't come in. If I saw Steve once, in all my years there, come to Connecticut, that was all.

Among the originals Hy and George are examining in the photo on page 13 is this nice one by Pat Boyette, page 3 from "Who's Staying in the Secret Room?" in ***Ghost Manor*** #1 (Oct. 1971) Scan courtesy of Donnie Pitchford. © Charlton Comics Group.

3
FARNHAM...YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE EDWARD MILLER...I WON'T MARRY YOU IN JUNE OR EVER!
MILLER? THAT PEEPER CAN NEVER OFFER YOU HALF THE THINGS YOU'LL HAVE AS MY WIFE!
WELL, SHE AIN'T TRUE LOVE, ARE KARP... SOMETHING YOU'LL NEVER OFFER ANY WOMAN...
FARNHAM LAUGHED AT AGATHA BROWN... HE WAS CERTAIN SHE'D MARRY HIM! HE HAD REASONS FOR THINKING SO....
BRING IN THE ACCOUNT OF EBENEZER BROWN...
YES SIR!
CALL IN THE LOAN OF EBENEZER BROWN...! BEGIN FORECLOSURE PROCEEDINGS ON THE BROWN HOME!
SEND FOR YOUR CHIEF FROWTHER IMMEDIATELY!
IF YOU WANT YOUR HOUSE NOW TO RECEIVE THE TREATMENT SHE REQUIRES, YOU WILL SWEAR THAT YOU SAW EDWARD MILLER LEAVING THE HOUSE WITH A VERY HEAVY CARPETBAG!
BUT... MR. KARP...? YES, MR. KARP..... WHATEVER YOU SAY!

PITCHFORD: Did you ever have any regular guys working in the bullpen, as far as producing the art on site?

WILDMAN: I inherited a lot of guys from the previous editor, who was Sal Gentile and the fellow before him was Dick Giordano and prior to him Pat Masulli. I inherited a lot of people and I gradually changed a number of them, and I was called an S.O.B. by a lot of them, but you could see the reason. Even with Joe Gill. It's for a fresh approach. You can't have a book all Eisman, like when you've got a variety or a certain character. A little fresh approach, a different story by different talents makes a book interesting. And also some people may be fans of your work and they would love a book of yours and the same holds true of me.

PITCHFORD: And here's a page from a fellow who lived in Texas. And he probably got that because of you. You saved it from the shredder or the padder.

WILDMAN: [*takes original art page from Donnie*] Pat Boyette. [*shows Hy*] Pat Boyette.

EISMAN: Yeah.

PITCHFORD: [*laughs*] You got it. What's your opinion of Pat?

WILDMAN: Pat Boyette, I only met him once because we had him and a couple other artists in Texas.

PITCHFORD: Himes, Fred Himes.

WILDMAN: Fred Himes. He's since died, Pat's died, but they were nice guys and we'd go down there and we'd be on a company tour with the publisher and our distributor in the area. And while we were there, we'd contact these fellows, we'd get together for lunch. Trudy could tell you, Fred Himes was great, Pat was great.

TRUDY: Fabulous.

WILDMAN: Yeah. And Fred Himes, you'd never think of it, but he had married a Spanish girl and he learned Spanish. And when we were with him one time, when he called somebody over, "*Bluhbluhbluhbluh*," he's talking. [*to Hy*] I'm listening to him like if you'd started speaking Spanish all of a sudden. But he was—and so was Pat—a regular guy. They were great. He was a writer and artist.

EISMAN: Yeah, yeah.

WILDMAN: It was nice having these talents with these guys. Tom Sutton was another one. All you had to do was call up Tom and say, "Look, I need six pages." You had it.

EISMAN: [*studying page of original art*] Is this Charlton?

WILDMAN: Yeah.

EISMAN: Who was doing the lettering then?

PITCHFORD: That's Pat.

EISMAN: Oh!

WILDMAN: Yeah, he did everything. That's what I'm saying. He wrote it, penciled, inked, and lettered.

EISMAN: Yeah, that's why it looks good.

PITCHFORD: [*hands another original art page to Hy and George*] That's a Boyette DC, which there're not too many of.

KOHL: I'm wondering—especially George—did you like doing maybe two- or three-part stories where there would be three or four issues with one story?

WILDMAN: You mean continuation?

KOHL: Yeah.

WILDMAN: We never really did that. Maybe we did that, once or twice, I guess. But I just liked going full-length.

KOHL: I'm thinking of the super-hero things where there might be three or four issues in the storyline.

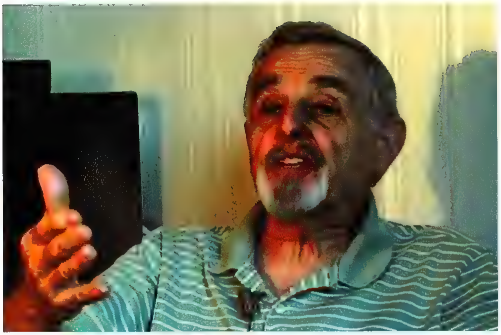
WILDMAN: You see, there again, this is where Nick Cuti influenced me. He suggested, in addition to all of the divisions we had, how about a super-hero division? But the Old Man knew that we'd got burned on those one time because, again, the editor [***Ed. note:*** *George is referring to Pat Masulli*] was at fault, who he'd hired and how they were handled, like *The Blue Beetle*. So anyway, Nick had come up with one called *E-Man*. *E-Man* did very well and we broke with that, and we had some others. Nick knew the super-hero world. But now we're in another stage and we got into two or three superhero titles, but it never became a booming division of Charlton, no.

KOHL: I just wondered if you guys experimented with that.

WILDMAN: We did experiment with a lot of other things up there, like we might have sent a writer on a tour to all the radio stations, because like when I mentioned we'd go visit the distributor up in Chicago or Los Angeles. I was always going along as the editor, but also editor/artist of *Popeye*. And the first thing I always did was visit the children's hospital, and I'd do a radio show, and then I was going to be at a certain restaurant that night and fans would come in. But you see, the Old Man was getting two or three things out of me that way, representing the company as a—I won't go into it, [*audience chuckles*] but he was a fox. But I didn't mind. I got well known that way too.

A choice 1998 Sunday ***Popeye*** original by Hy, courtesy of Donnie Pitchford. Popeye TM & © 2011 KFS.

POPEYE
HELLO OLD BUDDY!
WHAT'S UP POPEYE? YOU SEEM DEPRESSED!
OLIVE IS MAD AT ME!
BUT I ALWAYS SAY YA GOTTA TAKE THE GOOD WITH THE BAD!
...THINGS USUALLY HAPPEN FER THE BEST!
INTO EACH LIFE SOME RAIN MUST FALL!
...THAT'S THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES!
IT NEVER RAINS BUT WHEN IT POURS!
BUT THEN AGAIN EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING!
...THAT'S THE WAY THE BALL BOUNCES!
I'M SORRY I ASKED!



PITCHFORD: But did you go on airplanes and say you created the Flintstones? That's the next question.

WILDMAN: No. [*audience laughs*] I have a friend [***Ed. note:*** *Ray Dirgo*] who did *The Flintstones*, yeah. He would say that, and he could answer "yes" because, in his mind, he would think, "I'm answering—Yes, I created this issue of this book. [*audience chuckles again*] I created that.' Yes, I created that issue." And he felt he wasn't lying.

PITCHFORD: What about some of the talents who came through, the careers that you helped to launch?

WILDMAN: Tom Sutton, Steve Ditko, Pat Boyette . . . Oh wow, Trudy?

PITCHFORD: Newton?

SAM BROWN: Were there any female artists?

PITCHFORD: Any female artists? Sam's interested. [*audience laughs once more*]

WILDMAN: Nope. No.

PITCHFORD: Sorry.

WILDMAN: Oh, John Byrne.

PITCHFORD: John Byrne. Don Newton was one.

WILDMAN: Yep. You know them better than I do.

PITCHFORD: Okay, well, let's trade chairs. [*audience laughs*] So Hy, tell us again. Do you remember any of the specific titles you worked on for Charlton? You said romance. Was it just generic romance?

EISMAN: Yeah, you put out six-page stories, they went in, they just changed the titles of the books. [*audience chuckles*]

PITCHFORD: Joe Gill retyped page one? [*audience laughs*]

WILDMAN: When the ship was going down, we were running all reprints, we just kept going to the morgue.

EISMAN: Oh, by then, I was gone.

WILDMAN: Yeah, you were gone.

EISMAN: But this is an asterisk that might be interesting. The true story–type magazines that Charlton was producing, if you know what the true story magazines looked like, someone would write a story and then there'd be photographs, there wouldn't be illustrations, but be photographs of people in the situations. And once Vinnie Colletta found out that they were buying stuff like that, he bought a camera, and he had this big place on Pavonia Avenue, and he set up a room in the back, and he made a little area look like a soda shop. Then he had a little area look like a bedroom, then he had a little area to look like a setting in a living room, and he would get model sheets from New York and he would photograph the people in the situations. And then he found out that if you brought models from New York, you had to pay them twenty-five to thirty dollars an hour. So he went out on Pavonia Avenue and he would pick up ladies of the evening. [*audience laughs*] And he would pay whatever their charge was, and that could be anywhere from ten to twenty, but it was a hell of a lot less per hour.

WILDMAN: Yeah, and they would do a hell of a lot more. [*audience laughs once more*]

EISMAN: Anyway, as he was doing that, he needed models and one time, he needed a male model who had been shot and was lying out of a car. So I was lying out of this car [*audience laughs uproariously*] at seven dollars a page [*audience laughs again*] and I was wounded. Part of my body was on the ground and part was still in the car, and she was standing over me with a gun. And she was getting more money than I was getting. That was part of my seven bucks. [*audience chuckles again*]

KOHL: Do you have a copy of that?

EISMAN: I don't have a copy of anything.

PITCHFORD: Hy, that may have been your best *and* worst experience.

WILDMAN: But I'll tell you, what Hy just mentioned, you answered a question for me, how the Old Man got into making magazines. Because they told me before I was ever there, they had a room where they shot the models. And he probably did, he went out in the street and got these models and everything else, and it was part of the mystery magazines.

PITCHFORD: Well, you know there's a rumor that there was a basement room where old girlie magazines that had been printed were stashed. Is there any truth to that?

WILDMAN: If there was, they're gone [*audience chuckles once more*] because a Wal-Mart replaced Charlton and there's nothing left to tell you Charlton was ever there.

PITCHFORD: I also heard a rumor that Larry Flynt hired the plant to print his early issues of a certain magazine. Was that true?

WILDMAN: Yup. What was the magazine?

EISMAN AND SEVERAL MALE AUDIENCE MEMBERS: *Hustler.*

WILDMAN: Larry Flynt came and Charlton started publishing all of his stuff and then as Larry Flynt grew big, he learned distribution through Charlton, through our distribution division. When he was ready to step out, he did his own. That's how much he appreciated all Charlton had done for him.

George and Trudy Wildman at the Popeye Fan Club banquet in Chester, Illinois, September 10, 1994. Photo by and © 2011 Donnie Pitchford.

PITCHFORD: And this may an urban legend, but I've heard the story that there was a group of Girl Scouts or Brownies that were being given a guided tour of the plant and that very quickly, they had to steer them away because centerfolds were coming off the big presses. Is that true?

WILDMAN: Yeah, and a lot of pressmen were going, "Ooh, boy, look at that one." [*audience laughs once more*] I remember those days too. Everything was Italian in the plant. [*audience laughs again*] Oh, the pressmen and everybody in the plant, they were all Italians. Half of them didn't speak English, but they were nice guys.

PITCHFORD: George, what is your best memory, your best experience when you were at this company through the years? Is there any one thing that stands out?

WILDMAN: Well, when I said how much I did for those people who had worked there, a lot of these artists we just mentioned, it was great for me too having been editor. I owed them a lot because I was there 16 years. And then I went full-time doing what I always wanted, as a cartoonist. When we went under, King Features wanted me to continue *Popeye* when it went to Western, so I still kept my work in that area. So those are maybe the two spots I have in my life, the happiest was when I started there and when I quit. [*audience laughs*] Honest to God, and all the in-betweens. [*audience laughs again*]

PITCHFORD: What about the very worst thing? Is there a worst memory?

EISMAN: That's what he just said. The best memory was working there and the worst memory was working there. [*chuckles with audience*]

WILDMAN: I paid my dues.

EISMAN: Yes.

PITCHFORD: Okay, Hy, do you have anything to add about this gentleman or working for Charlton, or any other funny memories about the personalities, people, or events that may come to mind?

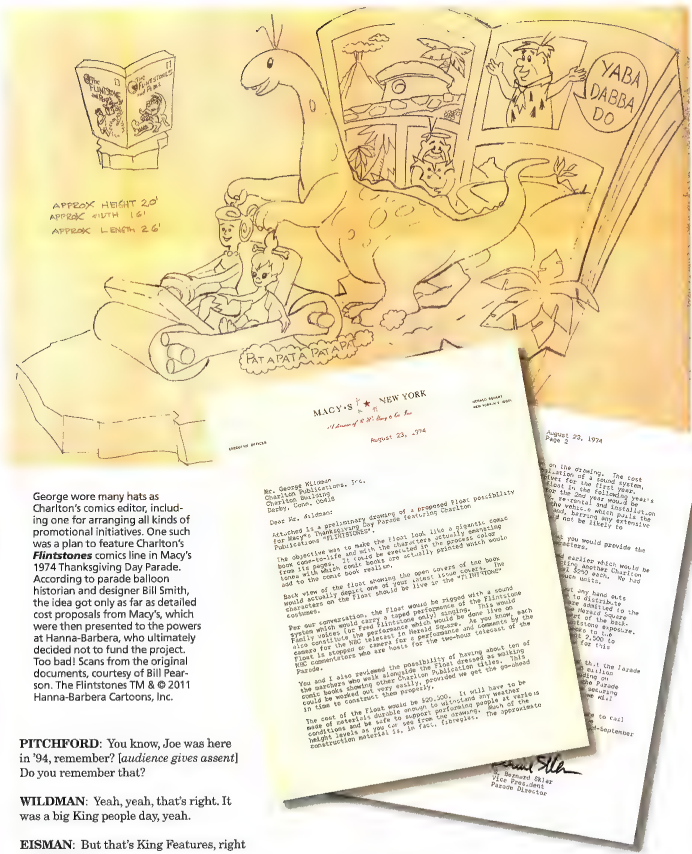
EISMAN: About George?

PITCHFORD: Oh, yes. You can talk about George. [*audience chuckles as George hides his face behind a curtain*]

EISMAN: No, I got along with George from the moment I met him. We met through the National Cartoonists Society and I didn't know what George did at the time. We just started talking and we found out that we went through the same kind of thing. We were talking about Joe D'Angelo [***Ed. note:*** *former King Features Syndicate chairman*], I remember, the first time we met.

WILDMAN: Sure.

EISMAN: And George was explaining that Joe never knew who he was after being introduced to him a number of times and I said I had a similar thing, that Joe would look at me and then look for something on my clothing and he would say, "Oh, Land's End. Yes, I know you well." [*audience laughs*]


YABA DABBA DO
APPROX HEIGHT 20'
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PATAPATA PATAPATA
MACY'S NEW YORK
August 23, 1974
Mr. George Wilson
Charlton Publications, Inc.
Charlton Building
Derby, Conn. 06418
Dear Mr. Wildson:
Attached is a preliminary drawing of a proposed Float possibility for Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade featuring Charlton Publications "FLINTSTONES".
The objective was to make the float look like a gigantic comic book cover-life and as the characters actually proceed with some living reality. It would be executed in the manner which would look like which could be seen on the covers of the book.
And to the comic book realism.
Back view of the float showing the open covers of the book. Flintstones would actually appear to be in the "FLINTSTONES" would actually depict one of the four scenes from your latest issue. The characters on the Float should be live in the "FLINTSTONES" costumes.
Per our conversation, the Float would be rigged with a sound system which would record a taped performance of the Flintstone theme which would play continually throughout the Parade. This would provide the performance of the Flintstone family voices (we feel Flintstone would be done live on the Float with the characters actually being there, as you know, each time the camera focuses for a performance and comment of the Float is stopped or camera focuses for a performance and comment of the NBC commentators who are hosts for the two-hour television Parade.
You and I also reviewed the possibility of having about ten of the members who were singing and performing as walking comic books showing other Charlton Publication titles. This could be worked out very easily, provided we get the go-ahead in time to construct them properly.
The cost of the Float would be $20,000. It will have to be made of materials durable enough to withstand any weather conditions and be safe to use from performing people to a height of 15 feet above the street. Much of the construction material is, in fact, fiberglass.
Sincerely yours,
Bernard Sklar
Vice President
Parade Director
August 23, 1974
Page 2

George wore many hats as Charlton's comics editor, including one for arranging all kinds of promotional initiatives. One such was a plan to feature Charlton's ***Flintstones*** comics line in Macy's 1974 Thanksgiving Day Parade. According to parade balloon historian and designer Bill Smith, the idea got only as far as detailed cost proposals from Macy's, which were then presented to the powers at Hanna-Barbera, who ultimately decided not to fund the project. Too bad! Scans from the original documents, courtesy of Bill Pearson. The Flintstones TM & © 2011 Hanna-Barbera Cartoons, Inc.

PITCHFORD: You know, Joe was here in '94, remember? *[audience gives assent]* Do you remember that?

WILDMAN: Yeah, yeah, that's right. It was a big King people day, yeah.

EISMAN: But that's King Features, right up to this day.

WILDMAN: King Features didn't pay top dollar either as far as the syndicates and the artists and so on.

A nice example of George's hidden-pictures work for ***Highlights*** magazine, from ***Highlights Presents Get Set for Summer!***, 2007. Scan courtesy of Donnie Pitchford. *Highlights* TM & © 2011 Highlights for Children, Inc.

EISMAN: No.

PITCHFORD: Hy, we know that you teach at the Joe Kubert School. And I know, George, you have spoken to high school groups and college groups. Hy, what advice would you give a high school or college student interested in being a professional artist?

EISMAN: If they're serious about doing it, you have to dedicate yourself to it. You can't make it a weekend, or a part-time "when I get done with twiddling or tweeting, or whatever, [*audience chuckles*] and I have nothing else to do, I'll draw." It can't be done that way, because there are too many guys out there, working day and night, to get into the business and you have to be serious about it. Read a lot—not only comics, but read anything that you can find—stay up to date on what's happening in the country, in the world; and just always focus on what you want to do. You can't make it a part-time job.

PITCHFORD: Okay, and the same question for George.

WILDMAN: I agree with everything he just said, and I might want to add as far as to a student, being that you're in high school now, you put your total effort, starting right now, into your work. If you have an assignment due Monday, don't start on it Sunday night.

EISMAN: Yup.

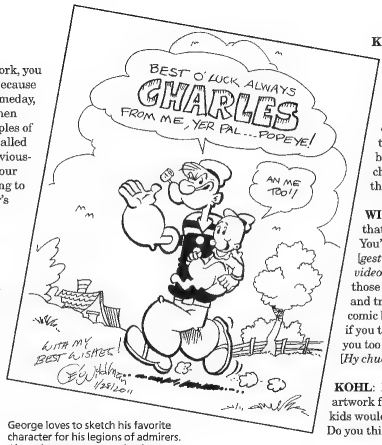
WILDMAN: You do your work, you put your *total* effort into it because I'm going to tell you this. Someday, your day is going to come when you'll be asked to show samples of your work. In my day, they called it your "portfolio" and it's obviously going to have to include your high school work. You're going to have to lay that on an editor's desk and you can't tell him, "This isn't quite my best."

EISMAN: Right. [*chuckles*]

WILDMAN: Because when I was an editor at Charlton, I got that said to me, "This isn't my best." And I said, "Then what are you doing here?"

EISMAN: Right, absolutely.

WILDMAN: Your work has got to look professional enough to me to publish, because that's how I've turned people down and I hate like hell to write a letter like that to a submitter, saying "Your work is not fit enough, yet, to publish." That's the best advice I could give you in thinking about your future.



George loves to sketch his favorite character for his legions of admirers. Above is a recent example given to Charles Clark, a young Texas fan. Popeye TM & © 2011 KFS.

KOHL: You guys probably know this, with the kids on the Internet and texting and everything else. Do you think comic books will ever come back? You think someday, they'll be rediscovered, maybe children will say, "Wow, this is fantastic."

WILDMAN: You've got that tube now, called TV. You've got these games [*gesturing as if operating a video game*], you could call those two or three things now, and try to match that with a comic book. I'll give you credit if you tried, but I wouldn't give you too much. Don't count on it. [*Hy chuckles*]

KOHL: Do you think if you did artwork for the Internet, maybe kids would read comics online? Do you think that might happen?

WILDMAN: I don't know. What do you think, Hy?

EISMAN: I don't think so.

WILDMAN: No.

HONORING THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE
and THE STAMP COLLECTING HOBBY
PHILATELIC TREASURES
including HIDDEN OBJECT PUZZLES!
by AWARD-WINNING CARTOONIST
and CHILDREN'S BOOK ILLUSTRATOR
George Wildman
PROMOTE YOUR HOBBY - SHARE YOUR MEMORIES!
TEACH IN A FUN TIMELESS WAY!

One of George and son Karl's recent collaborative efforts for educators and hobbyists is this neat philatelic promotional booklet filled with stamp-related hidden-object pictures and historical fun facts about the postal service. © 2011 Wildman Creative Studios.

KOHL: So you think this is pretty much a dying art, maybe?

EISMAN: Well, a lot of guys are doing stuff for the Internet. They're starting cartoons on the Internet, are hoping to go into print at this point, but I don't think that's going to last.

WILDMAN: Another source that was great for comic artists coming up was newspapers, and look what's happening to newspapers now.

EISMAN: Yep.

WILDMAN: That was a big avenue. There was Charlie Schulz of *Peanuts* fame. Who was the guy at King Features who was the comics editor? The old-timer.

EISMAN: Oh—

WILDMAN: We'll walk out of here and it'll come to us. But his great claim in life was he turned down Charlie Schulz.

EISMAN: —Oh, Sylvan Byck, Sylvan Byck, right.

WILDMAN: Yeah, Sylvan Byck, he almost blew his brains out because he sent Schulz walking. [*audience chuckles*]

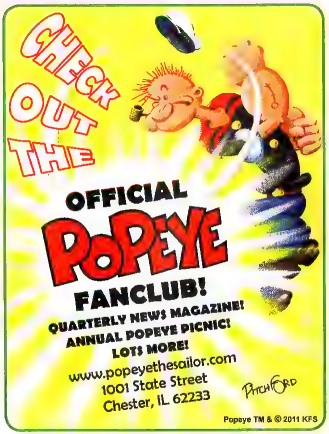
EISMAN: Well, you know the reason he turned it down. Nobody reads talking dogs. [*audience laughs*]

WILDMAN: Yeah. But I'll tell you now too, when I look back at my career, if somebody ever came to me with Spongebob Squarepants—

EISMAN: [*chuckles*] Oh, jeez!

WILDMAN:—I would say, "You better take a walk, the door is right over there." [*audience laughs again*] Spongebob Squarepants?

EISMAN: You know, talking about "This isn't my best," the guys show me portfolios before they're going to go in and they'll say something like, "Well, this has a little something there." I says, "Then pull it out, redo it." I tell them, "If you walk in to an editor, and he's turning the pages, and he gets to the page that you don't think



should have been in there anymore, that's the one he's going to linger on. And then you're going to say, 'Well, I can do a lot better than that,' and that's the end of it."

WILDMAN: Yeah.

EISMAN: So if you see something that doesn't look good to you anymore, yank it, put something better in.

WILDMAN: And I can tell you the reverse is true with an editor. Many times, as an editor, you find a gem lands on your desk.

EISMAN: Yeah.

WILDMAN: And I'd say to my secretary, "Greta, send this guy a note." But you'll see a lot of great stuff come in too that's unfound and that works very well too.

EISMAN: Yeah, yeah.

PITCHFORD: Any questions from anyone else? [*pause*] What about any final comments from our panel?

WILDMAN: No, but I'll say I could speak for both of us. We're both happy to be here—

EISMAN: Oh, yeah.

WILDMAN: —and our association with the Popeye Fanclub and how nice they've been to both of us right along.

EISMAN: Yes.

WILDMAN: And coming down here, we look forward to it.

PITCHFORD: Thank you very much.

WILDMAN: Our pleasure. We enjoyed being here. [*audience applauds*]

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(don't forget the "Z")

Dick Giordano

the Man for All Seasons

An atypical Giordano comics job for Paul while the latter was an editor for the ***Weekly World News.*** Scan courtesy of Paul Kupperberg. Art © 2011 Weekly World News.

by Paul Kupperberg

THE FIRST TIME I BECAME AWARE of Dick Giordano was during his tenure at Charlton Comics. As much as I loved his art (what's not to love?), it was his editorial transformation of tiny Charlton from major cheese factory to creative competitor that earned him my admiration. Later, Dick loomed large in my career, being the top guy in DC Comics' editorial when I went on staff in 1991; in fact, it was Dick who essentially hired me. Dick was one of the nicest human beings on the face of the planet, which always struck me as a bad quality to have when you're managing a large number of people, especially a large number of flaky, creative people. I figured you were better off being able to raise your voice and be mean to get people to pay attention. But Dick knew better. Plus, everyone he oversaw as DC's editorial director knew damned well that when Dick asked you for something, he was asking you as someone who had done your job before, no matter what your job happened to be. And done it well, likely under mediocre conditions. He had the love and respect of everyone there. Dick always spoke in low, measured tones and we all leaned in to hear what he had to say.

Dick, as was no secret, had a hearing problem and wore hearing aids in both ears. He often missed what was being said, especially in meetings when several people were speaking at once. My voice happened to be pitched to whatever frequency Dick could still hear in, so I never had a problem talking to him.

Dick practically grew up professionally at Charlton, on staff and as an artist throughout the 1950s and '60s, but

I only ever recall once or twice spending any time talking about the old days with him. The first time was during one of the few and far between lunches we had after he had retired from DC but before I left my editorial position. Over a Rob Roy (or two) and a good meal at a pub down the street from the office, Dick talked about some of the talent he had worked with, from Sal Trapani to Pete Morisi (who Dick took me to lunch with at the Society of Illustrators while I was editing DC's revival of P.A.M.'s *Peter Cannon—Thunderbolt*).

The second was on the drive back to Connecticut (I live in lower Fairfield County, he, at the time, in upper) from Shea Stadium where a bunch of DC staffers had just seen the Mets game, viewed from the Warner Bros. corporate box (with wait staff! ballpark hotdogs served on trays! by waiters!), a birthday present to Mr. Giordano from DC's upper management. I don't follow sports, not any of 'em, so I could care less about going to a Mets game, but I went because it was Dick's birthday and, let's face it, whether you care about baseball or not, how often do you get to hang in a corporate skybox and get served wieners by waiters?

On the drive home, I asked Dick how long he'd been living in Connecticut and he said he moved up here to work at Charlton in Derby, and I just started asking questions about the physical plant and how things worked there and some of the people he'd known. Dick loved the place as you can only love somewhere you spent so many fun and formative years; it's the way I feel about the "old" DC, the company as it was in the mid-'70s at 75 Rockefeller Center, with a staff of maybe 35 or 40 that interacted like one, big sick, dysfunctional family. It was an amazing time to be there, at the nexus of the Silver and Bronze Ages, where you still had Swan and Infantino coexisting with Kaluta and Wrightson. Dick was there for, and instigated, the Charlton equivalent of that time during his Action-Hero phase.

Even after Dick retired from DC and returned to full-time freelancing, we kept in touch, most often when I would call him with work for everything from custom comics to an illustration for an issue of *Weekly World News*. Dick was always happy to hear from me and took the job, delivering precisely what I had in mind, only better than I had envisioned it. Because he was Dick Giordano, one of the masters of the art.

I was fortunate to know Dick as an artist, a boss, and, best of all, a friend.

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Dick Giordano in one of his last public appearances at the June 2009 HeroesCon "Charlton Panel" in Charlotte, NC. Also on the panel were **Roy Thomas** and **Steve Skeates.** Photo taken from video by Bob Burr, still capture produced by Donnie Pitchford. Many thanks, Bob and Donnie, and especially Roy, who supplied the video. Photo © 2011 Bob Burr.

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RON FRANTZ
Charlton Memories

Remembering Dick Giordano

> A certain writer of evident good sense and good taste says: In literature I am fond of confining myself to the best company, which consists chiefly of my old acquaintances, with whom I am desirous of becoming more intimate; and I suspect that nine times out of ten it is more profitable, if not more agreeable, to read an old book over again than to read a new one for the first time.
>
> James Floy, Editor
> *The National Magazine*, July 1855

IN THIS MODERN AGE OF enlightenment where every whim somehow manages to find a publisher, I suspect that some contemporary readers might have difficulty understanding Mr. Floy's point of view. However, with the possible exception of a few large publishers who have a vested interest in filling bookstores and newsstands with new product, I doubt that the opinion of this 19th century Methodist clergyman will cause any discernable vexation. For in the minds of those inclined to believe such things, the good reverend now resides somewhere beyond the pearly gates, playing harp music with the angels.

I must admit to finding his comment strangely comforting. This is probably because I have often felt a warm, almost giddy sensation while becoming reacquainted with some of the literature that pandered to my sensibilities during those halcyon days of youth and might explain why comic books that I read more than forty years ago seem so much better than the vast majority of those published today. It probably goes without saying that this includes many of the titles published by Charlton, especially the Action-Hero comics edited by the late Dick Giordano. When Dick wrote an occasional editorial or commented on letters from readers, it was apparent that he cared about the comics he produced and the people who read them.

As with so many things, my friendship with Giordano began almost by accident. In the fall of 1982 I became a cochairman of the annual Wintercon, held in Oklahoma City. Somehow, after we divided up the workload it became my responsibility to invite an artist to attend the convention as its guest of honor. In past years we'd had some great guests, including such notables as Will Eisner, Al Williamson, George Evans, Alex Toth, and Don Newton. Coming up with a suitable guest, especially on short notice, proved to be a daunting task.

I FIRST EXTENDED AN INVITATION to Jack Kirby, who I had previously met at a Dallas convention. The attendance at that particular event suffered miserably because two feuding factions decided to stage conventions the same weekend. As luck would have it, I chanced upon Kirby wandering around the hotel lobby in a fit of boredom. We struck up a conversation and then sat down and smoked cigars together. I recall that we spent most of our time together talking about tobacco, proving beyond doubt that there are one or two things in life more important than comic books. When a few years later I asked Kirby about coming to our convention, he put me on hold for a few days and then begged off, pleading a heavy work schedule.

Next on my list of possible candidates was artist Joe Kubert, who seemed to appreciate the offer but said he had too much going on at his comic art school to get away for a weekend. John Severin, of EC Comics fame, was not quite so cordial. He sent word through my friend Jerry De Fuccio (to whom he was related by marriage) that he did not care to discuss it. All I could do was respect his wishes and try to find someone else.

Then out of the blue I thought of Dick Giordano. He had recently been tapped to be vice-president and editorial director of DC Comics, and many collectors fondly remembered his earlier work at Charlton. I didn't think he'd ever been to a convention in this part of the country. We shared a mutual friend in artist Pete Morisi. Not being one to beat around the bush, I asked Morisi if he thought Giordano might be interested in coming to the convention. Morisi had no way of knowing, but he was kind enough to give me Giordano's phone number at DC. That number bypassed the switchboard operator and went straight to Giordano's office. I must admit to being mildly surprised when he answered his own phone. After introducing myself, I was pleased to learn that Giordano had been expecting my call. Morisi had called ahead to put in a good word for me, which I thought was damn nice of him.

There was something about Giordano's manner that instantly warmed the heart. Unlike most corporate figureheads I have met along the way, Giordano was cheerful, soft-spoken, and exceedingly modest. My first impression was that he was a nice guy who put his pants on one leg at a time like the rest of us. After we had talked for a few

minutes, the moment seemed right for me to extend an invitation. Before I could get the words out, Giordano beat me to the punch by saying that he had heard about the convention from Morisi and said that he would like to come. I was almost disappointed that I didn't have to use the impromptu speech I had prepared for the occasion.

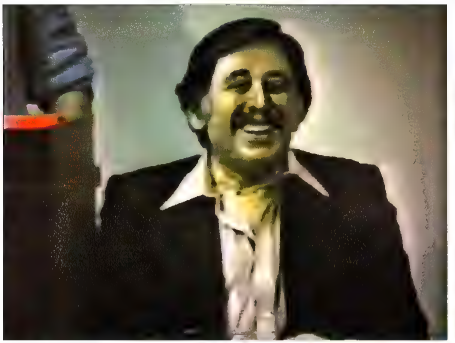
Before committing himself, however, Giordano asked if I could hold for a minute while he checked his schedule. In almost no time he was back on the line with the good news: "It looks like I am free that weekend. I can attend your convention. Actually, it will work out fine for me, as things have been really hectic around the office. I could use a short vacation. Don't worry about the details. My secretary can make all of the necessary travel arrangements. Call me back in a few days and I will give you the flight number and the time of arrival."

When the big day arrived, I met Giordano at the airport terminal. I instantly recognized Dick from pictures I had seen in some of the fan magazines. I made it easy for him to spot me by holding a new DC comic against my chest. I later thought that might not have been such a good idea because some of the people in close proximity looked at me as if I were demented. When Dick saw the comic book he broke out into a big smile. We shook hands and I welcomed him to Oklahoma City. When I asked if his flight from New York had been good, he said that the plane had experienced some turbulence while flying through a patch of bad weather around St. Louis. He looked as if he might have been bounced around a little, but he seemed to be none the worse for wear.

With a hint of gentle good humor, Giordano seemed to take it all in stride. While we were walking through the crowded airport to pick up his luggage, I felt like I was living the scene from *Casablanca* where Humphrey Bogart says to Claude Rains, "I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship." Once we had his luggage in hand, we meandered over to the nearest bar and became better acquainted over a few drinks. I remember Giordano sipping on a glass of white wine while I enjoyed a scotch and soda. Looking back, it seems strangely ironic how such trivial details are now branded into my memory while bigger and possibly more important things are forgotten. I think Rod McKuen might have been right about the mind being a junkyard.

Giordano had a great time at the convention. He told me later that it was the first comic book convention he'd ever attended where anyone bothered to see if he was comfortable. Dick said at most cons he felt more like an exhibit than a guest. More often than not the people running the show ignored him entirely. If there was any communication at all, it was usually a matter of some nebulous employee tapping him on the shoulder with directions on where he was supposed to be at any given moment. The rest of time he was left entirely on his own. I suppose we did things a little different at our shows in Oklahoma City. We wanted our guests to have a good time and went out of our way to see that they did. They would often be strangers when they arrived and a few days later they went home as our friends. It was certainly that way with Giordano and me.

On Saturday evening I had the pleasure of moderating a panel discussion that included Giordano, Eclipse Comics publisher Dean Mullaney, fan columnist Catherine Yronwode, and SF illustrator Richard Courtney. It was the first time I had ever done anything like that, and it showed. Despite my inexperience at the podium and the inept manner in which I tried to steer the discussion, the event seemed to go pretty well. I think most of the fans in attendance enjoyed it. Much to my surprise, someone brought a video camera (not all that common in those days) and recorded the panel discussion in its entirety. I still have a copy of the videotape. Maybe I will have it transcribed one of these days for some future publication.



Dick Giordano at the November 1982 Wintercon Comics Panel in Oklahoma City, OK. This and the other photos in this article are taken from video by an unknown camera operator, with still captures produced by Donnie Pitchford. Photos courtesy of and © 2011 Ron Frantz.

After the panel, I took Dick out to a good restaurant for a decent meal. This quiet time gave us the opportunity to talk without interruption. My only regret is that I didn't have a tape recorder handy to record the conversation. Dick shared his fond recollection of playing Ping-Pong with Steve Ditko in the recreation room at Charlton. He spoke about past meetings with American Comics Group editor Richard Hughes and M.E. Comics publisher Vincent Sullivan. While we were talking about the sales figures on some of the DC titles, Dick casually mentioned that *Wonder Woman* sold poorly in the U.S. yet extraordinarily well in Europe and

Asia. There were his seemingly unlikely declaration that Archie Comics outsold DC in Canada and his problem of finding an experienced editor to fill a vacancy on the DC staff.

I asked Giordano what it was like to leave Charlton in late 1967 and become an editor at DC. From what I could gather it was not the happiest time of his life. Among other things, he had professional issues with the interim publisher, Carmine Infantino. The following is a basic summary of Giordano's comments on the subject as best as I can remember:

> Carmine was a terrible publisher. He often made decisions based on his personal likes or dislikes. Carmine did stupid things like canceling a good-selling title if an artist—or writer—or editor had done something to annoy him. It might have been something that happened a long time ago, as Carmine was not a "forgive and forget" kind of guy. By the same token, he would keep a bad-selling book on the production schedule long after it should have been discontinued if the creative team or the editor remained in his good graces. In my opinion, it was not a very good way to run a business.
>
> Carmine disliked working with people who knew more about anything than he did. Since he knew almost nothing about production or printing, he had trouble when those kinds of problems popped up. For example, I had only been with DC for a short time when one of the artists turned in a two-page spread to another editor that was drawn out of sequence and could not be used as a centerfold. The pages needed to be printed side by side. When he saw it, Carmine almost went into a panic. The book was already late and there wasn't time to have the pages redrawn.
>
> I just happened to be passing by and stopped to see what all the commotion was about. Once I understood the problem, I tried to explain that the pages could be printed as they were with a routine mechanical adjustment. Carmine (and everyone else who was standing around with their hands in their pockets) told me that it could not be done. Nuts! The only reason they thought that is no one at DC had ever done it before. I don't think Carmine believed me when I told him that we did it all the time while printing magazines at Charlton. I finally convinced Carmine to let me have the pages and I would work out the details with the engraver. I got everything fixed and the print job turned out fine. The weird thing about it is Carmine thought that by "sticking my nose in his business" I made him look foolish. That was never my intention. I just tried to help solve a problem and Carmine resented it. We were never on the best of terms after that.

ONE OF THE WORST-KEPT SECRETS in the comics business is that Giordano was the brother-in-law of artist Sal Trapani. About 1965, he and Sal set up a little studio to produce story and art for various comic book publishers as a sideline venture. Interestingly enough, Steve Ditko briefly worked out of the studio after he left Marvel in 1966. This accounts for Ditko's artwork appearing in some of the Dell and ACG comics of the period. Apparently Trapani did most of the legwork, making the rounds at the various publishers and lining up jobs while Giordano remained behind to keep the studio running.

Although I have seldom heard it mentioned outside of conversations with Giordano and Frank McLaughlin, Trapani was a big fan and collector of old-time radio shows. Trapani accumulated a large collection recorded on reel-to-reel tape. He was the founder of a group known as the Society of American Vintage-Radio Enthusiasts. His hobby became so time-consuming that he built a small recording studio in his home, complete with a sound stage and microphones. There, Trapani and a small group of friends would create new radio shows along with enactments of the original programs. Apparently there were times when Trapani had difficulty meeting art deadlines because he became so engrossed with his hobby. Being an old-time radio fan myself, I can easily understand how such a thing could happen. Although McLaughlin described Trapani as being somewhat moody and unlikable, I would like to have met him. I'm sorry I never had the chance.

When I mentioned to Dick that I noticed a strong similarity of the art style he used on *Sarge Steel* and *Nukla* (for Dell), he just smiled. Giordano said that he created *Nukla* and had drawn most of the stories that were inked by Ditko or Trapani. Giordano didn't seem to think Nukla was a very good character, but I told him I always liked it. I guess there is no accounting for taste. Not long ago, I bought a couple of issues of *Nukla* on eBay for a pittance. After not having them around for many years, it was fun to read them again. I thought the stories were quite similar to the Action-Hero comics Charlton published about the same time. The only major difference I could see is that Dell's printing was a little better than Charlton's. I can't say for certain, but I suspect Joe Gill might have had a hand in producing the scripts. I think if Charlton had published *Nukla* instead of Dell, hardly anyone would have noticed the difference.

After we finished our meal, we stopped by my apartment so I could show him a few items from my collection. Giordano was impressed with some of the bound volumes

of comic books that I had sitting on the bookshelf. Some of them were the Action-Hero titles Dick had edited for Charlton in the 1960s. Actually, it turned into a sentimental moment. Giordano seemed amazed that anyone cared enough about those comics to have them bound into books. While Dick was looking them over, he had sort of a wistful expression on his face as he said, "You know, a sizeable portion of my life went into the production of these comics. It seems kind of strange seeing them in one place like this." He got a little misty-eyed when I told him that I had bought many of the comics at my neighborhood drugstore when they were new. They had been in my collection ever since. Giordano looked pleased (and maybe a proud) when I asked him to autograph the bound volume of *Sarge Steel* for me.

I lost track of the time, but we must have talked for several hours. He told me a lot of great stories about working with Frank McLaughlin on *Judomaster*, Pete Morisi on *Thunderbolt*, and Pat Boyette on *The Peacemaker*. While Giordano was looking at the volume of *Blue Beetle* stories by Steve Ditko, he looked surprised when he saw the issue of *Mysterious Suspense* #1. As remarkable as it seemed at the time, Giordano did not know that the Ditko *Question* stories in the issue had been published. Dick had never seen the comic book, as it hit the stands the year after he had left Charlton. According to Giordano, he had commissioned those *Question* stories to be published in *Blue Beetle* as a backup feature. Unfortunately, the title was discontinued before they could be used.

About the time Ditko stopped drawing *Spider-Man* at Marvel, he became enamored with the writing of novelist Ayn Rand. According to Giordano, there was a brief period of time when Ditko did not want to draw anything unless he could proselytize Rand's "Objectivist" philosophy. For those who may be unfamiliar with that school of thought, Rand had a peculiar notion that everything in life boils down to simple black-and-white principles. Good is good and evil is evil, and there is no middle ground. There is not a spec of gray to be found anywhere and anyone who thinks otherwise must be deluded. The privileged few who spend their lives accumulating vast amounts of wealth care very little about those less fortunate. All that matters in life is getting what they want and to hell with everyone else. Personally, I see it as a rather sad commentary about life and living.

Regardless, the problem that Ditko encountered was that most comic book editors felt their readers were looking for entertainment and not a lecture on ethics or metaphysics. Giordano was quite fond of Ditko, even if he could not quite

NUKLA
Captain Whale
THIS IS CAPTAIN WHALE... FOR DECADES HE HAS RULED THE FROZEN S.C. ENTISTS AND EXPLORERS HAVE WINTERED HERE, ENDURING GREAT HARDSHIPS. EVEN WITH THE MOST MODERN SCIENTIFIC DEVICES! CAPTAIN WHALE SCORNS ALL THIS... THE ANTARCTIC IS HIS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT!
BUT HIS EMPIRE HAS BEEN INVADED! MORE AND MORE SCIENTISTS ARE COMING EACH YEAR... PERMANENT BASES ARE BEING ESTABLISHED... SMALL "CITIES" ARE GROWING... AND CAPTAIN WHALE HAS DECLARED A COLD WAR ON THESE INTRUDERS! THIS IS WHAT BRINGS THE MAN KNOWN TO THE WORLD AS MATTHEW GIBBS, C.I.A. AGENT AND U-2 PILOT, INTO ANTARCTICA! BUT IT IS SEAS NUKLA THAT THE C.I.A. OPERATIVE IS FORCED TO FUNCTION... BECAUSE CAPTAIN WHALE'S 'KILLER-WHALE' SUBMARINE IS TOO POTENT AN OPPONENT FOR A MERE MORTAL!
Ed Dell Trapani
"YOU MEDDLING FOOL! I WARNED YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM THESE WATERS... I RULE HERE! I'M KING OF THE ICE!
NOT ANY MORE, CAPTAIN WHALE!

Splash page to ***Nukla*** #3 (June 1966), pencils by Dick Giordano, inks by Sal Trapani. Scan courtOesy of Ron Frantz. Nukla TM & © 2011 Dell Publishing Co., Inc.

understand his friend's radical change of mood. To help him keep a roof over his head (and to give Ditko a chance to get some of it out of his system), Giordano gave him a free hand producing the *Blue Beetle* and *Question* stories. In that venue Ditko was free to pound the pulpit until he was

blue in the face. Except for Giordano, no one at Charlton paid much attention. The plan must have worked. By the time Ditko moved on to DC and started work on *Beware the Creeper*, he seemed to regain his grip on reality. Ditko continued to work on his philosophical stories for many years but he has been wise enough to do most of it between paying jobs. I am not sure that Ditko ever realized it, but he owed Giordano a lot. Not many editors would have gone out on a limb for a friend like that.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1987 I paid a visit to Charlton Publications at their office in Derby, Connecticut, to discuss a distribution deal for some of the ACE Comics titles I was publishing. [***Ed. note:*** *See Ron's account of his Derby trip in* Charlton Spotlight *#2.*] While I was there, I let the management know that I was looking for some good material to reprint. They allowed me to examine what remained of the original art and reproduction stats of comic books that Charlton had published from 1948 to 1978. Located in an area close to a loading dock, that section of the warehouse was about as lively as a mortuary. It looked to me like no one at Charlton paid much attention to it. Evidently they had more important things to worry about.

Most of the stats had been stored for years in large, gray paper envelopes, and many were well worn and tattered. They were lying everywhere, covered with dust and indignity. No doubt they had been rummaged through many times by entrepreneurs who had been there before me. Most of the good stuff, like the superhero and SF titles, or stories drawn by popular artists, was long gone. Someone had even carted away the *Hot Rods & Racing Cars* stats along with a few of the romance titles. An enterprising agent, who reportedly kept some of the stats in his possession, had been selling them to interested buyers from here to Timbuktu. Since then, they have been scattered to the four winds. Occasionally I hear about some of the stats selling for ludicrous prices on eBay.

How many folks can you identify? Joe Gill and Pat Boyette must have had a high old time with this one. It's page 5 of "The Comic Capercon" from ***The Adventures of Spencer Spook*** #1 (Oct. 1986), courtesy of Ron Frantz. Spencer Spook TM & © 2011 Ron Frantz/ACE Comics.

THIS IS HOW THEY DO BUSINESS IN THE BIGGIES
MIKE ANGELO, I FREEZE-WIE!
I ALWAYS RECOGNIZE REAL TALENT, MIKE!
YOU KNOW ME?
WE NEED YOU AT CD COMICS, MIKE! I WANT TO MAKE YOU AN OFFER!
UH OH!
SIN A GOOD CRITIC-X TRASH SERVICE THING!
BEAT IT!
THERE! IS THIS ENOUGH?
IS ALL THIS FOR ONE YEAR?
YEAH? THIS IS FOR ONE PAGE!
FERDINAND-MARCOS' PICTURE! GOOD GRIEF, HE'S NOT EVEN A GOOD COUNTERFEITER!
I'LL THINK ABOUT YOUR OFFER! TALK TO YOU LATER!
RIGHT
FIFTY
THERE YOU ARE, MIKE! HAVE A CIGAR!
HE'S WORSE THAN THAT CROCODILE!
5.

Off to one side, I noticed the stats from the licensed Hanna-Barbera titles like *Yogi Bear* and *Magilla Gorilla*. For obvious reasons they had been separated from the rest. These remained relatively undisturbed. Although I had been told that none of this material was available, curiosity got the better of me. I poked around a little bit just to see what was there. It was a good thing I did. Much to my surprise, I found the stats for most of Charlton's Action-Hero line hidden under a pile of cartoon material. I have no idea how they got there. I suppose this could have been done by accident or perhaps someone had purposely tried to hide them. I say this because Charlton had sold the publishing rights for those character rights to DC a few years before. I was astonished to see that Charlton still had the stats.

Later that evening, Frank McLaughlin and I paid a visit to Dick Giordano at his home. I was sure Giordano, as a vice-president at DC, would be interested in my discovery. When I told him about what I had found, his face lit up like a beacon. As he explained it to me, Charlton advised DC at the

time of the sale that the stats for *Captain Atom*, *Blue Beetle*, *The Question*, *The Peacemaker*, *Thunderbolt*, *Son of Vulcan*, and *Judomaster* had been lost. I assured Dick that the stats were still in Charlton's warehouse, and I told him exactly where to find them. He thanked me for the information and said he would arrange for a representative from DC to pick them up. I had the impression he would waste little time getting it done. I have noticed that in recent years DC has reprinted some of the material. Judging from the quality of reproduction, I presume those editions were printed from Charlton's original stats. I am glad to have played a minor role in their recovery; otherwise they might have been lost forever.

The page in question was from ***Adventure Comics*** #418 (Apr. 1972). Art © 2011 Estate of Alex Toth; Black Canary TM & © 2011 DC Comics.

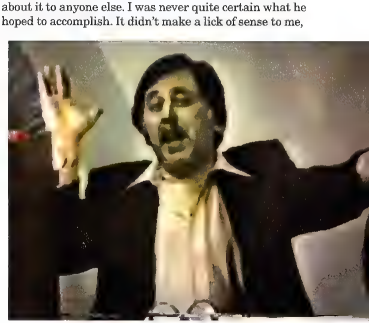
This was about the same time I was having trouble trying to find an inker to replace Frank McLaughlin, who had been inking Ditko on *The Face*. After inking the first two issues, McLaughlin suddenly found himself swamped with work at DC and had to bail out. Some of this work involved "ghosting" some pages for Dick Giordano, who had been inking John Byrne on a new *Superman* series. This was nothing unusual, as McLaughlin and Giordano had been friends for many years and often worked together when deadlines were tight.

By coincidence, I received a phone call from Byrne one hot summer afternoon. That particular day stands out in my memory because the air-conditioning unit at my office had conked out and I felt as if I had spent a day in purgatory, waiting for the repairman to arrive. Byrne was calling because he wanted to purchase an Alex Toth original I had advertised in the *Comics Buyer's Guide*. I don't know if Byrne remembered me or not, but we'd met about seven years earlier at a convention in Oklahoma City Byrne was certainly not the most congenial comic book artist I had ever met. As Lum used to say to Abner on their old radio show, he had the kind of attitude that made you want to "whop him right on top of the head." I think Byrne had been starstruck by his newfound celebrity status. He went out of his way to be rude and unpleasant. I don't mind telling you that I was not the only person there who felt that way.

I got a bit of a jolt when I asked Byrne to autograph an issue of *Charlton Bullseye* that included a whimsical article about the "Rog 2000" strip he had drawn a few years earlier at Charlton. Featuring a wisecracking, cigar-smoking robot, the strip had been a favorite of mine. Lowering his eyes, Byrne looked at the fanzine as if he despised the very sight of it. Byrne, of course, had drawn those "Rog" stories before he latched on with Marvel and became a fan favorite while drawing *The New X-Men*. But I think the only thing on his mind that day (besides basking in the adulation of an adoring public) was selling his original *X-Men* pages for a hundred bucks each. After I had declined his generous offer to buy any of the art, Byrne hurriedly scrawled his signature on the fanzine and handed it back to me as if it smelled of manure. Byrne then suggested that I move along and not waste any more of his valuable time. Those were not his exact words, mind you, but that was the gist of it. I was more than happy to comply. Five minutes of his company was enough to last a lifetime.

Byrne seemed a little perturbed when I told him that the Toth original had already been promised to another person who had called earlier. Not wanting to take no for an answer, Byrne then offered to pay considerably more for the page if I would cancel the deal with the other guy and sell it to him instead. Much to his chagrin, I told Byrne that I had given my word to the other buyer and I had no intention of breaking it. Maybe his word meant nothing to him, but mine did to me. Now, in all fairness I should mention that Byrne was not the only prospective buyer who had offered to up the ante. The best I could figure is that I had offered a very desirable page at a price well below its market value.

Trying to remain civil, I engaged Byrne in a bit of small talk. I discovered that we didn't have much in common, but we at least shared a few mutual acquaintances. He seemed impressed (for at least a moment) that I had been working with Steve Ditko. During the course of the conversation, I casually mentioned to Byrne that I had recently seen some of his *Superman* pages that Frank McLaughlin had been in the process of inking. For whatever reason, this really upset him. I can only presume this was something that he did not want me to know about. It didn't help matters any when he said I had to be woefully mistaken about seeing the *Superman* art in McLaughlin's studio. Byrne told me in no uncertain terms that I didn't know what the hell I was talking about and "insisted" that I not to mention a word about it to anyone else. I was never quite certain what he hoped to accomplish. It didn't make a lick of sense to me,



either then or now. But no matter what Byrne wanted me to believe, I knew it to be true. I saw McLaughlin working on those *Superman* pages with my own eyes. Our discussion ended on that somewhat discordant note.

A few weeks later, I called Giordano to ask his advice about a problem I was having with DC over a trademark issue. While we were shooting the breeze as friends often do, I casually mentioned my previous conversation with Byrne. After filling him in on the details, Dick said he didn't understand Byrne's antagonism. Dick said it was no big secret around DC that he and McLaughlin had been working together on the new *Superman* series. Being a gentleman, Giordano was hesitant to speak harshly about one of his colleagues. He did say (sort of off the record) that Byrne had a bit of an ego and could be a real pain to work with. I was certainly in no position to disagree.

Giordano was used to dealing with these kinds of problems. As a vice-president at DC, he had to work with quite a few artists and writers (not to mention a few editors) who shared the same affliction of ego. To do his job as well as he did, Dick had to be willing to put up with all sorts of nonsense. For example: Once upon a time some big shot from Warner Bros. marched into Dick's office unannounced, holding a young Beau Brummel by the hand. Acting as if he had just stepped down from his throne on Mount Olympus, he pronounced: "This is my nephew, little Sonny Bub. He just graduated from (you fill in the blank) college with a degree in liberal arts. I want you to put him on the payroll as an editor. I am sure you can find something around here for him to do."

Of course, it didn't matter if DC had an opening in the editorial department, or if a dozen better-qualified applicants had been patiently waiting in the wings. Rank does have its privilege and what this Warner Bros. executive wanted, he usually got. Call it good old-fashioned American nepotism. When Dick objected that the young man lacked the necessary experience for the job, he was told: "That is no problem. *You* can teach him everything he needs to know." On that note, Giordano had a new editor who required on-the-job training, whether he wanted him or not.

I remember one curious incident that happened to me at the 1987 summer convention in Chicago. It began when a young artist approached me in the publishers' exhibit room. He was not much more than a teenager and had a swagger about him that would have made Groucho Marx green with envy. To hear him talk, he was an unrecognized genius ready to conquer the world. All I needed to do was put him to work on a project of his choosing and his spectacular talent would make both of us rich. Like so many of the kids who hoped to break into the comics business (and it seemed like there were dozens of them) his work showed promise, but I thought he had a long way to go before he was ready to sell it professionally.

SCRIPT #
THIS PAGE
SCRIPT
AS A FIGHTER AND A MAN...YOU'RE STILL ROTTEN. YOU MADE YOUR BIG MISTAKE WHEN YOU GOT CHUMMY WITH PUT'S DAUGHTER...
UHNH!
KRAK!
...YOU HAD A CHANCE FOR THE BIG BUCK AND DIDN'T CARE WHO GOT HURT!
OOF!
YOU GOT A BIG MOUTH, JUDOMASTER, BUT YOU'LL NEVER LIVE TO TELL ANY ONE!
YOU'RE NOT OUT UNTIL THE COUNT REACHES TEN, HERB. I'M NOT OUT OF IT YET, AND TO PROVE IT...

This hard-hitting sequence comes from ***Judomaster*** #97 (Oct. 1967), page 15. Pencils by Frank McLaughlin, inks likely by Dick Giordano. From the original art collection of the ***Spotlight*** editor. Judomaster TM & © 2011 DC Comics.

After looking at his samples for another of those insipid imitations of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* theme, I politely said that I was sorry, but I couldn't use him. When hard-pressed for an explanation as to why, I tried to explain it was my policy to work only with experienced professionals. Due to my own limited experience, this was not merely a matter of preference but an absolute necessity. On that note, the young man went ballistic. As his face turned beet-red, he loudly pronounced before God and a few wide-eyed spectators that I was an idiot who knew nothing about comic books . . . and even less about art. I must admit that it was a little embarrassing. Before stomping away in a huff, he sneered and said: "Why are you working with second-rate hacks like Steve Ditko and Pat Boyette? Can't they get work at the big companies anymore? They must really be desperate if they are willing to work for *you!*" What could I say. If this youngster's lack of skill didn't keep him from finding work, his manner would.

An hour or two later, I ran into Dick Giordano and invited him to join me for lunch. While we were waiting for a hamburger and a cup of coffee, I told him about the arrogant young artist I had just met. Although it had been a bizarre experience for me, Giordano just shrugged. I assume Dick had experienced more than his fair share of that sort of thing. I know he was always on the lookout for new talent. While we were on the subject of dealing with troublesome children, Dick told me a funny story about his trying to settle a squabble between two of his junior editors. It began when one of them announced to the press that a particular artist would be illustrating a sensational new comic book on his production schedule. Upon hear-

ing the news, the second editor literally had a hissy fit. He complained to anyone who would listen that it wasn't fair because the artist in question had already promised to draw a different comic book for him.

In almost no time, the two editors were practically spiting at one another when they passed in the hallway. Before it was over, Giordano had to sit them down in his office as if they were a pair of bickering siblings. When they proved to be unwilling to reach some kind of a compromise, Dick was forced to make a decision. Just to complicate matters, the editor who didn't get his way accused Giordano of playing favorites and sulked for weeks. The editor who won walked away from the meeting with glee in his heart—a smirk on his face—and his nose in the air. The way he gloated on his way out the door you would have thought he had just received a lifetime achievement award from Columbia University. I would imagine those two editors are sworn enemies to this very day.

I could not help but laugh when I heard the story. With my tongue planted firmly in my cheek, I remember telling Giordano that he sounded more like a glorified babysitter than an executive vice-president at DC. At least when he was an editor at Charlton he had the pleasure of working with mature people most of the time. Of course, Dick knew that I was just ribbing him. Having spent some years in retail management, I knew what he was going through. Dealing with people and problems becomes a part of the daily routine. Giordano did what he had to do to get the product out on time, even if it involved wiping a few noses along the way. I had nothing but respect for him. By my way of thinking, Giordano must have had the patience of Job.

I was saddened to learn that Dick had passed away. While thinking back on the good times we had spent together, what stood out most in my memory was how Dick treated both fans and colleagues with respect. He was a gentleman in the truest sense of the word. Dick spent the better part of his life working in the dog-eat-dog business of comic book publishing, a vocation where avarice and treachery and greed are often the rule and not the exception. Yet somehow he never sacrificed his principles for the sake of personal gain. His word was as good as gold. With apologies to baseball manager Leo Durocher, Dick was a splendid exception to the rule that nice guys *don't* always finish last. I was proud to know him, and prouder still to have called him my friend. Bless his memory.

EVERY NOW AND THEN I think about that kid who made such a nuisance of himself in Chicago. I have long since forgotten his name. It is amusing to imagine that with his endearing charm he might have gone on to become a superstar in the comic book business. However, my better judgment tells me that he probably never sold a single drawing to a publisher. Of course, I could be wrong. That was over twenty-five years ago and a lot of things could have happened in that time. For all I know he may now have a multitude of adoring fans who worship the ground he walks on. At this very moment his originals could be selling on eBay for astronomical prices. No doubt stranger things have happened. I like to think that many of the people and situations mentioned in this column are a living testament to that fact. That certainly includes me.

Now that I find myself episiodically retired, it often occurs to me that I have grandchildren who are older than I was when I began a lifelong appreciation for comic books and other forms of escapist literature. Perhaps this accounts for my being able to remember that precocious time when I could relate to the mischievous escapades of Dennis the Menace. Now, almost a half-century after the fact, I admit to being more sympathetic to the perpetual suffering of good old Mr. Wilson. Depending on one's point of view, such a realization can be either a blessing or a curse. I'm still trying to sort that one out for myself. Since I haven't yet arrived at a definitive answer (or at least one that makes any sense to me), I can't help but wonder what thoughts the Reverend Floy might have had. I like to think he would have understood the situation and could offer some sage advice. I don't know how it is with anyone else, but I could use all the help I can get. . . .

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Editor's Notes & Readers' Letters

Charlton News & Reviews

Michael Ambrose, *Editor*

Charlton Spotlight (formerly *Fightin' Confessions*) Vol. 1, No. 7 • Winter–Spring 2011–2012 • "We yam what we yam!"

CHARLTON EDITORS. My earliest Charlton Comics memories are of a few random titles that drifted into my and my older brother's hands in the early 1960s—various *Fightin's* and the occasional *Space War* and *Space Adventures*. Pat Masulli was executive editor at that time. Dick Giordano, who'd been a prolific artist at Charlton since the early 1950s, took over from Masulli in 1966, leaving at the end of 1967 for a bigger, better career at DC Comics. I read whatever Charltons that came my way then, but incredibly enough virtually none were the "Action-Hero" books that Giordano championed and for which he's most fondly remembered at Charlton. I completely missed *Blue Beetle, Peacemaker, Captain Atom, Thunderbolt,* and *Sarge Steel* but vividly remember the *Fightin' Five*, of all things. Our meager comics allowance in those years went toward the latest *Spider-Man* and *Strange Tales, Classics Illustrated* and *Magnus, Robot Fighter.* Any other comics, including Charltons, appeared at the dispensation of a very whimsical Fate.

George Wildman was executive editor by the time I started consciously buying and collecting Charltons in the early 1970s. Though I was looking primarily for anything by Steve Ditko in the ghost books, I knew there was a host of other titles George was responsible for that I never bought or even looked at. By then I realized there were such creatures as comic book editors, as distinct from writers and artists, and I was impressed that George oversaw the big line of titles Charlton was putting out—nearly four dozen at its height. I love the Charltons of the '50s and '60s, but the '70s was *my* Charlton decade.

Looking back, I'm convinced the 1970s was Charlton's greatest era and that George was, overall, Charlton's best editor. Thus it's a distinct pleasure for me to finally offer a long feature article focusing on him. For this I must thank Donnie Pitchford, George's first and foremost fan, who took the initiative to interview George and Hy Eisman at the 2009 Popeye Picnic in Chester, Illinois, and who took the further giant step of videotaping it for posterity. All I did was give Donnie a line of leading questions. (And speaking of Hy, this interview educated me about 1,000 percent more on his career than I'd ever known before. I never even knew he'd been a Charlton artist!) It's no exaggeration to say that Donnie is mostly responsible for the issue you hold in your hands.

When I learned of Dick Giordano's passing I knew, sadly and inevitably, that I'd have to arrange for a memorial tribute in *Spotlight*. I turned immediately to old friend and *Spotlight* regular Ron Frantz, who'd known Giordano well during the 1980s, when Ron was an independent comics publisher interacting with other comics professionals, including old Charlton hands Joe Gill, Steve Ditko, Frank McLaughlin, Pat Boyette, and Dick Giordano. Ron immediately agreed to take on the task, and the result is the beautiful, insightful memoir of Giordano you find here. Thanks, Ron.

Paul Kupperberg's memoir of Dick Giordano in this issue is excerpted from a much longer, general memoir of Paul's Charlton experiences. Paul is one of a handful of bright young comics creators who got their start in the business while George Wildman was sitting in the Charlton editorial chair. George was always receptive to new talent; he and assistant editor Nick Cuti really made the strings ring at Charlton during that period, the greatest comics expansion the company ever had. Charlton really was a sleeping giant in those days (see my article about it in *BACK ISSUE* #6 (Sept. 2004), if you can find a copy). I know you'll all be eager to read Paul's full memoir next time around.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

RON FRANTZ'S Charlton memories appear here regularly. Ron is the author of ***Fandom: Confidential,*** a critically acclaimed historical documentary of fandom (see ad in Ron's article). Currently he is putting the finishing touches to a pulp history book. Contact Ron at **Magilla445@aol.com**.

PAUL KUPPERBERG made his first professional story sale to Charlton in 1975, a tale illustrated by Mike Zeck for ***Scary Tales.*** Paul went on to write hundreds of comics, primarily for DC, where he was also an editor. He is also a prolific novelist and short story writer. See more of Paul's past and present doin's at **http://kupperberg.blogspot.com/**.

DONNIE PITCHFORD is a retired educator-broadcaster living in Carthage, Texas. After a 25-year career teaching CHS-TV students, Pitchford returned to his first love—comics! He is currently producing the Lum and Abner® comic strip and audio feature for FirstArkansasNews.net (***http://firstarkansasnews.net/lum-and-abner*** and ***www.gocomics.com/lum-and-abner***). He is also webmaster of ***www.lumandabnersociety.org*** and ***www.chstvpitchford.com***.

IN MEMORIAM

It's our sad duty to report the passing of the following Charlton Comics creators.

MARIO De MARCO
†, 2022–March 1, 2008

DON SHERWOOD
September 12, 1930–March 6, 2010

DICK GIORDANO
July 20, 1932–March 27, 2010

HENRY SCARPELLI
July 30, 1930–April 4, 2010

TONY Di PRETA
July 9, 1922–June 2, 2010

AL WILLIAMSON
March 21, 1931–June 15, 2010

JON D'AGOSTINO
June 13, 1929–November 29, 2010

GENE COLAN
September 1, 1926–June 23, 2011

WE GET LETTERS!

BILL PEARSON
The E-Man artwork looked very familiar, but I must say, the lettering was outstanding! Particularly because I happen to know it was done by an old-timer who hadn't lettered anything for at least a decade! (I only mention the lettering because I know nobody else will.) The problem with the Mauser story is that the title character didn't have a big enough part!

And where's the color? I want my dime back! Or was it twelve cents back when these characters first appeared? $7.95 seems like a lot, but I realize inflation has pushed everything up, so this issue of the Spotlight is well worth the cover price.

I truly admire the brilliantly muted bacover painting by Pat Boyette, and am glad to see it presented this way, as a full bleed full page, without any type overlaid. I never saw it while I was there, but I can understand why even Charlton would reject it as a cover. It's simply too dark for newsstand appeal, and after Charlton's muddy printing, covered with a big logo and lots of blurbs, it would have looked like ten square yards of the moon's surface shot through gauze.

But as a painting, well, that's a different story altogether. A masterpiece of fantastic imagery! Boyette was so great, and so underrated throughout his career. Few artists would trust their skills to portray such a dimly lit scene, in such dark tones, and such a complicated composition. Totally unique! I'm sure it's a haunting picture to anyone who takes the time to live in that menacing tableau for a while.

It reminds me of a one-shot comic book called *Lurid Tales* I put together for Fantagraphics' Eros line many years ago. I wrote all the stories, lettered them, designed the logo and even did the cover illustration myself. It would be my first comic book cover.

I asked Pat to contribute a drawing for the bacover, and described what I'd done, a "lurid" spoof of an early Avon cover by Wood, a line drawing to be colored by the traditional three color overlays.

Well, Boyette sent a fabulous full color painting which was superior in every way to what I'd done, and funnier! Exactly the perfect picture for that title and its contents. I knew immediately it should be the front cover, and my drawing should go on the back, but I'm ashamed to admit my editorial judgment was trumped by my greedy ego. Pat had done MANY covers, but this might be my one and only chance to have one myself! It's a mistake I've regretted ever since.

As for this issue of the *Spotlight*, Pat's painting belonged just where you put it, and Staton's front cover is a knockout, without doubt the best cover you've ever had. Joe and Nick really are a fabulous team, each complementing the imagination of the other, in the many fine comics they've created over the years.

When I look back now, I'm really gratified, and I'll bet Joe and Nick are too, that we young upstarts were lucky enough to work and play in the spontaneous back industry of producing comic books, when we were free to create almost any fantasy on paper without much supervision (or any at all from Charlton) by wise conservative overseers who worried about propriety or social conventions or political correctness. Our products were scattershot aimed at adolescents, and nobody except a guy name Wertham had ever been concerned about the content of their children's favorite four-color publications. The standards of the

http:firstarkansasnews.net/lum-and-abner

★Santangelo—

Continued from Page 1

by the flood waters that ripped through the Valley.

Restored plant

He immediately went to work and restored the plant only to have it badly damaged by another flood in October. As Santangelo stood on Division Street, watching his plant being ravaged, he suddenly took off his hat and tossed it into the water.

A Sentinel photographer caught the picture and it went worldwide on the Associated Press wire service.

Santangelo was responsible for developing Pershing Drive into the popular shopping area that it is today.

He built restaurants, theaters and a bowling alley in the Division Street area.

He also constructed Santangelo Terrace, a large group of condominiums on Atwater Avenue. He is the owner of the J. C. Penney building on Elizabeth Street, and the Howard and Barber building on Main Street

He started his publishing company in the former Pepe building on Cottage Street, Derby, before moving to Division Street into his new plant in the 1960's.

Honors

Santangelo has been honored by the Vatican, the Republic of Italy, the Sons of Italy and the United Nations for his humanitarian work.

In 1975 he was appointed vice president of the National United Nations Day committee.

On Oct. 4, 1975 he was honored in Derby during the Santangelo Appreciation Day.

Mayor Edward J. Cecarelli ordered all city flags at half staff in honor of both Santangelo and former police commissioner Dominick Verdisi, who also died Saturday at the age of 80.

Cecarelli said Santangelo "was one of Derby's more outstanding citizens and one who left his mark on the city. He will be greatly missed. I express my deepest sympathies to his family, friends and associates."

Joseph Guardani, chief financial officer at Charlton, said today, "We are very shocked here and very much overwhelmed. We will certainly miss him."

Besides his wife he is survived by two sons, Charles and John Jr., current president of the Charlton Capital Publishing Co., a daughter, Mrs. Ronald Scott, also of Derby, and ten grandchildren, along with numerous nieces and nephews.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete.

Santangelo dies, was industrialist

DERBY — John Santangelo Sr., Valley industrialist and founder of the Charlton Publishing Co., and the Charlton-Capital Companies, died unexpectedly today in Italy at the age of 86.

He was the husband of Carrie Altorelli Santangelo of 125 Atwater Ave. He was born in San Valentino, Abruzzi, Italy on March 15, 1899 and left for America in 1923.

His first job in the United States was that of a bricklayer in New York City and by 1926 he was his own subcontractor. It was in 1931 that he married and shortly after began his venture into the publishing world.

He began that start in publishing by printing the lyrics of popular songs and sold them throughout the New England area and New York City. This was the beginning of the Charlton Publishing Companies, currently one of the nation's largest magazine publishers.

Charlton Publications now has an annual magazine production of 45,000,000 units with 35 magazine titles, 67 comic book titles marketed in over 90 countries around the world.

JOHN SANTANGELO SR.

When Santangelo built his plant on Division Street, he mixed the mortar and laid the bricks himself.

In 1955 his modern plant was almost totally destroyed

Please turn to Page 2

From the Ansonia (CT) *Evening Sentinel* for Oct. 8, 1979, a front-page obituary for Charlton founder **John Santangelo, Sr.** Courtesy of Bill Pearson.

Comics Code had deteriorated to a few obvious censorable words and situations by the late '60s, so these were easily self-censored without causing serious restraint.

I doubt if it's at all like that nowadays, when editors, writers and artists are aware their efforts are being scrutinized by academic adults, comics creating and appreciation courses are being taught in colleges, and graphic novels are a legitimate literary genre. But nothing stays the same, and there may never again be a back alley industry like the one I knew. I worked hard in that profession for not very much money for quite a while . . . but at least I've got my memories of how much fun it was!

—— • ——

BILL SCHELLY

I honestly haven't had a chance to READ the two complete strips, but I've "run barefoot" through all the special features, letters, etc., and found myself aflame with Charlton-itus again, that fever that causes comic book fans to dig out old Charlton mags from the collection to re-read and enjoy all over again.

The rarities, including photos of Wildman and others in their habitat (way back when), astound me. You keep finding fantastic new material, and you present it extremely well. I would have like to have read your review of Blake Bell's Ditko book, but it just didn't come out in time.

—— • ——

CHUCK BORDELL

I really enjoyed the magazine. The E-man story turned out great—it was nice to finally read the finished script! Also enjoyed the look behind "Charlton at Work." Things are so much different now. And I always enjoy seeing unpublished art from days gone by, especially from guys like Ditko and Giordano. How about a ripping Blue Beetle cover sometime? He was my favorite Charlton hero!

—— • ——

HOWARD LEROY DAVIS

Just finished reading the very enjoyable #6. The only fault that I could find with it is that I wished the E-Man story was twice as long. A beautiful story, but a complex one. All of the sequences in the story were worth more panels.

Joe and Nick haven't lost a step in the past 30 years . . . artistically, I mean. We are all grayer and slower afoot.

BTW, I think you did miss one set of credits. Maybe you can note in the next issue. You generally tell what the art is about and who did it. Except for the back cover. "Unpublished cover painting by Pat Boyette circa 1980." I suspect that he probably did it before they canceled the line so it might have been 1979 or earlier. He told me that it was a generic painting for any one of several titles, but he never told me how old it was when he gave it to me.

—— • ——

DENNIS RAY

I just wanted to point out that the back cover painting of issue #6 by Pat Boyette sure looks like the Warren character the Rook to me.

I loved this issue by the way, especially the gallery section. I found the pictures of the old Charlton offices very interesting as well, it was a very cool peek into the past.

Please, please find a way to print more on Mastermind, any chance to see Don Newton art is always a good thing. I would not mind seeing some PAM artwork as well, isn't there an unpublished Thunderbolt story still out there somewhere? Finally E-Man and Michael Mauser were always favorites of mine, I still fondly remember buying *E-Man* and *Vengeance Squad* when they were new on the racks so thanks for the "new" stories.

—— • ——

WALT WENTZ

Charlton Spotlight #6 just arrived, and I gotta say, each issue has been better than the last—this being a prime example! Not one, but TWO "new" Nick Cuti/Joe Staton stories (and E-Man and Mike Mauser, no less!). The photos from the King Features filmstrip are a fascinating inside look at the old Charlton plant . . . apparently crowded, cluttered and more than a bit grubby.

Then the rest of the book is jammed with all sorts of odd and interesting bits about the various artists and characters who worked for Charlton. I'll be mining this issue for bibliographic details for days. Interesting to note that Giordano's "tough guy spy" bears a VERY strong resemblance to Wally Wood's "Daredevil." Production-wise, the book is also an improvement over the previous issues—a strong, uncluttered cover, the layout open and inviting, the line art crisp and black, the halftones (mostly) with improved contrast.

Fun to finish off with a new installment of Cuti's "Weirdlings," too. Nick and I have been kicking around the idea of a complete collection of every "Weirdlings" cartoon ever published. Deciding on the target audience has been a bit of a puzzle. The obvious choice would seem to be grade school kids. But then these apparently simple cartoons are also slanted to a more erudite and mature audience—just how many grade-schoolers are familiar with *Moby Dick*, *The War of the Worlds* or the profession of the chimney sweep?

Sad to note that Gill, Howard and Elder have all passed on in such a short space—a reminder that we've got to get the history of this corner of the comics genre collected and published while the original sources are still with us. Notice I say "we," meaning "you," heh heh. Keep up the great work!

—— • ——

DEAN WEBB

Great [E-Man] story. I yearned to see this one in color, but it's a small thing. The storytelling was typically excellent, as the plot moved through timeframes and perspectives. Using the Time Traveler from the old Wells novel was a grand idea. I know that Nick Cuti has an abiding affection for this story, and it was neat to see this new variation on the classic theme. Joe Staton's art was typically excellent. Whatever the limitations might've been to getting a coherent story from what remained of the original, they were more than overcome. Thanks to everyone who made this story possible. It's a real treat to get new E-Man stories these days. For some of Nick Cuti's version of the original Time Machine check out this link: ***http://colemanzone.com/Time_Machine_Project/cuti.htm.***

—— • ——

MURRAY LOCK

The actual Charlton issues were sold here [New Zealand] (mainly the superhero ones, but some war and western ones as well) and the weird black and white reprints that were printed in Australia. They were collections of random issues. The colour Charltons appear to be exactly the same as the US ones except for the price. I have a

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feeling they may have come from England as some had our price and their price printed on them.

I did buy most of the superhero titles from the '60s revival (*Blue Beetle, Judomaster, Thunderbolt*, etc.) from the local bookshops and still have most of them today, although they are pretty battered now from being read countless times when I was a boy. They were quite difficult to track down as they appeared so irregularly so many were bought from secondhand bookshops in the '60s and '70s.

Marvel comics were widely distributed here, but not so many DC which mainly only appeared as black and white collections from Australia (along with Tower and some other smaller publishers). These collections were quite good but nothing really appeared in any continuity, which was OK for the DC ones which didn't have much continuity anyway.

Dell and Gold Key were quite widely available here. I had quite a collection of *Magnus Robot Fighter, Turok, MARS Patrol*, etc. at one time, but have long since been thrown out by my father when I made the mistake of leaving them in his care for a few months back in the late '70s. Most of my Marvel collection (which started at about *Fantastic Four* 20 and included everything Marvel put out until about 1972) went the same way, but, strangely, my Charlton collection mostly survived.

• —

JIM LUDWIG

Just got my *Spotlight* at my LCS today. E-Man did not suffer from not having color in my opinion. This is going to really seem odd to most people. I would rather have had the story published on its own. WHY? So there would be more room for the material about Charlton in the back. I have WAY too many comics to read now. I buy Spotlight for the inside scoop on Charlton. I know I will be in the minority, and will still buy the mag, but had to let you know my point of view and there are probably a few others out there with the same perspective. Still a great and appreciated mag with a fantastic back cover.

—— • ——

RANDY BUCCINI
Digital Webbing

Just had to write to tell you how much I enjoyed reading the latest issue of *Spotlight*. People often say they enjoyed reading something "from cover to cover" but in this case it's absolutely TRUE!! I can only imagine the work and coordination that went into getting the E-Man and Mauser stories together. It must have been so much fun to resurrect these stories. They never would have seen the light of day if not for you. Thank you! THANK YOU!

—— • ——

Charlton Comics Checklist: Year by Year *Part 6:* 1972–1986

Compiled by Dan Stevenson, with assistance from Mike Tiefenbacher
Edited by Michael Ambrose • © 2011 Dan Stevenson

Key: *Year, Title, Issues Published, & Total Number of Comics Published per Year*
Cover images © Charlton Comics Group except as noted

1972

Attack 3 (1/72) – 9 (12/72) 7
Beetle Bailey 87 (2/72) – 95 (12/72) 9
Billy the Kid 89 (2/72) – 97 (12/72) 9
Blondie Comics 195 (1/72) - 201 (12/72) 7
Bobby Sherman 1 (2/72) – 7 (10/72) 7
Bugaloos 3 (1/72) – 4 (2/72) 2
Career Girl Romances 67 (2/72) – 72 (12/72) 6
Cheyenne Kid 88 (1/72) – 93 (11/72) 6
David Cassidy 1 (2/72) 8 (12/72) 8
Drag 'n' Wheels 51 (2/72) – 57 (12/72) 7
Fightin' Army 101 (1/72) – 106 (11/72) 6
Fightin' Marines 101 (1/72) 107 (12/72) 7
Flintstones 10 (1/72) – 19 (12/72) 10
For Lovers Only 63 (3/72) – 68 (12/72) 6
Geronimo Jones 3 (1/72) – 8 (12/72) 6
Ghostly Haunts 22 (1/72) – 28 (12/72) 7
Ghostly Tales 91 (1/72) – 100 (12/72) 10
Ghost Manor 3 (2/72) – 8 (11/72) 6
Hanna-Barbera Parade 4 (1/72) – 10 (12/72) 7
Haunted 3 (1/72) – 9 (12/72) 7
Hot Rods and Racing Cars
112 (2/72) – 117 (12/72) 6
Huckleberry Hound 8 (1/72) 1
I Love You 95 (1/72) – 100 (12/72) 6
Jetsons, The 8 (1/72) – 14 (12/72) 7
Just Married 82 (3/72) – 90 (12/72) 9
Love and Romance 3 (1/72) – 9 (12/72) 7
Love Diary 76 (1/72) – 81 (12/72) 6
Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves
30 (2/72) – 35 (12/72) 6
Midnight Tales 1 (12/72) 1
Partridge Family, The 5 (1/72) – 14 (12/72) 9
Pebbles and Bamm Bamm
1 (2/72) – 9 (12/72) 9
Phantom, The 48 (2/72) – 53 (11/72) 6
Popeye 112 (2/72) – 117 (11/72) 6
Primus 1 (2/72) – 7 (10/72) 7
Quick Draw Mcgraw 8 (1/72) 1
Romantic Story 117 (2/72) – 124 (12/72) 8
Secret Romance 17 (2/72) – 22 (12/72) 6
Sweethearts 122 (2/72) – 130 (12/72) 9
Teen-Age Love 81 (2/72) – 89 (12/72) 9
Teen Confessions 72 (2/72) – 77 (12/72) 6
Teen Secret Diary 1 (2/72) [exist?] 1
Time for Love 26 (2/72) – 31 (12/72) 6
Top Cat 8 (1/72) – 14 (11/72) 7
Underdog 10 (1/72) 1
Yogi Bear 9 (1/72) 15 (12/72) 7
387

1973

Attack 10 (2/73) 14 (11/73) 5
Barney and Betty Rubble
1 (1/73) – 6 (11/73) 6
Beetle Bailey 96 (1/73) – 103 (11/73) 8
Billy the Kid 98 (1/73) 106 (12/73) 9
Blondie Comics 202 (1/73) – 207 (11/73) 6
Career Girl Romances 73 (2/73) – 78 (12/73) 6
Cheyenne Kid 94 (1/73) – 99 (11/73) 6
David Cassidy 9 (1/73) – 14 (9/73) 6
Dino 1 (8/73) – 3 (12/73) 3
Drag 'n' Wheels 58 (2/73) – 59 (5/73) 2
E-Man 1 (10/73) – 2 (12/73) 2
Fightin' Army 107 (1/73) – 112 (11/73) 6
Fightin' Marines 108 (1/73) – 115 (12/73) 8
Flintstones 20 (1/73) – 27 (12/73) 8
For Lovers Only 69 (1/73) – 74 (11/73) 6
Geronimo Jones 9 (1/73) 1
Ghostly Haunts 29 (1/73) – 36 (11/73) 8
Ghostly Tales 101 (1/73) – 108 (11/73) 8
Ghost Manor 9 (2/73) – 16 (12/73) 8
Great Gazoo, The 1 (8/73) – 3 (12/73) 3
Haunted 10 (1/73) – 15 (11/73) 6
Haunted Love 1 (4/73) – 5 (12/73) 5
Hot Rods and Racing Cars
118 (2/73) – 120 (6/73) 3
I Love You 101 (1/73) – 106 (11/73) 6
Jetsons, The 15 (2/73) – 20 (12/73) 6
Just Married 91 (1/73) – 99 (12/73) 9
Love and Romance 10 (2/73) – 15 (11/73) 6
Love Diary 82 (1/73) – 87 (11/73) 6
Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves
36 (1/73) – 43 (12/73) 8
Midnight Tales 2 (2/73) – 6 (11/73) 5
Partridge Family, The 15 (1/73) – 21 (11/73) 7
Pebbles and Bamm Bamm
10 (2/73) – 17 (11/73) 8
Phantom, The 54 (2/73) – 59 (12/73) 6
Popeye 118 (2/73) – 123 (11/73) 6
Romantic Story 125 (1/73) – 130 (11/73) 6
Sarge Snorkel 1 (10/73) – 2 (12/73) 2
Secret Romance 23 (2/73) – 28 (12/73) 6
1776, Charlton Classics Library 1 (3/73) 1
Sweethearts 131 (1/73) – 137 (12/73) 7
Teen-Age Love 90 (1/73) – 96 (12/73) 7
Teen Confessions 78 (2/73) – 83 (11/73) 6
Time for Love 32 (2/73) – 37 (12/73) 6
Top Cat 15 (1/73) – 20 (11/73) 6
Yang 1 (11/73) 1
Yogi Bear 16 (2/73) – 21 (12/73) 6
256

1974

Barney and Betty Rubble
7 (5/74) – 10 (11/74) 4
Beetle Bailey 104 (1/74) – 108 (12/74) 5
Billy the Kid 107 (5/74) – 110 (12/74) 4
Blondie Comics 208 (5/74) – 211 (12/74) 4
Dino 4 (6/74) 7 (12/74) 4
E-Man 3 (6/74) – 5 (11/74) 3
Fightin' Army 113 (5/74) – 116 (11/74) 4
Fightin' Marines 116 (1/74) – 119 (11/74) 4
Flintstones 28 (1/74) – 34 (11/74) 7
For Lovers Only 75 (9/74)-76 (11/74) 2
Ghostly Haunts 37 (1/74) – 41 (11/74) 5
Ghostly Tales 109 (1/74) – 112 (12/74) 4
Ghost Manor 17 (1/74) – 21 (11/74) 5
Great Gazoo, The 4 (6/74) – 7 (12/74) 4
Haunted 16 (7/74) – 19 (12/74) 4
Haunted Love 6 (10/74) 1
I Love You 107 (6/74) – 109 (11/74) 3
Just Married 100 (5/74) – 103 (12/74) 4
Love and Romance 16 (1/74) – 19 (11/74) 4
Love Diary 88 (6/74) – 90 (11/74) 3
Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves
44 (1/74) – 48 (11/74) 5
Midnight Tales 7 (6/74) 10 (12/74) 4
Pebbles and Bamm Bamm
18 (1/74) – 22 (11/74) 5
Phantom, The 60 (8/74) – 62 (11/74) 3
Popeye 124 (7/74) – 126 (12/74) 3

Sarge Snorkel 3 (6/74) – 5 (11/74) 3
Secret Romance 29 (10/74) 1
Teen Confessions 84 (1/74) – 86 (11/74) 3
Time for Love 38 (9/74) – 39 (11/74) 2
Yang 2 (5/74) – 5 (11/74) 4
Yogi Bear 22 (9/74) – 23 (11/74) 2
113

1975

Attack 15 (3/75) 1
Barney and Betty Rubble
11 (2/75) – 17 (12/75) 7
Beetle Bailey 109 (2/75) - 113 (11/75) 5
Beyond the Grave 1 (7/75) – 3 (12/75) 3
Billy the Kid 111 (2/75) – 115 (12/75) 5
Blondie Comics 212 (2/75) – 216 (11/75) 5
Creepy Things 1 (7/75) – 3 (12/75) 3
Dino 8 (3/75) – 13 (11/75) 6
Doomsday+1 1 (2/75) – 3 (11/75) 3
E-Man 6 (1/75) – 10 (9/75) 5
Fightin' Army 117 (2/75) – 121 (11/75) 5
Fightin' Marines 120 (1/75) – 126 (11/75) 7
Flintstones 35 (2/75) – 42 (12/75) 8
For Lovers Only 77 (2/75) – 82 (12/75) 6
Ghostly Haunts 42 (1/75) – 47 (12/75) 6
Ghostly Tales 113 (2/75) – 118 (11/75) 6
Ghost Manor 22 (2/75) – 26 (11/75) 5
Great Gazoo, The 8 (3/75) – 13 (11/75) 6
Haunted 20 (2/75) .24 (11/75) 5
Haunted Love 7 (1/75) – 11 (9/75) 5
Hong Kong Phooey 1 (5/75) – 4 (12/75) 4
House of Yang 1 (7/75) - 3 (12/75) 3
I Love You 110 (1/75) – 115 (12/75) 6
Just Married 104 (2/75) – 108 (12/75) 5
Korg: 70,000 B.C. 1 (5/75) - 4 (12/75) 4
Love and Romance 20 (1/75) – 24 (9/75) 5
Love Diary 91 (1/75) – 96 (12/75) 6
Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves
49 (1/75) – 54 (12/75) 6
Midnight Tales 11 (2/75) – 15 (11/75) 5
Monster Hunters 1 (8/75) – 3 (12/75) 3
My Only Love 1 (7/75) – 3 (11/75) 3
Pebbles and Bamm Bamm
23 (1/75) – 30 (12/75) 8
Phantom, The 63 (1/75) – 68 (12/75) 6
Popeye 127 (2/75) – 132 (12/75) 6
Sarge Snorkel 6 (1/75) – 11 (12/75) 6
Scary Tales 1 (8/75) - 3 (12/75) 3
Scooby Doo 1 (4/75) – 5 (12/75) 5
Secret Romance 30 (1/75) – 35 (11/75) 6
Secrets of Young Brides 1 (7/75) – 3 (11/75) 3
Space: 1999 1 (11/75) 1
Speed Buggy 1 (5/75) – 3 (11/75) 3
Teen Confessions 87 (2/75) – 92 (12/75) 6
Time for Love 40 (2/75) – 45 (12/75) 6
Valley of the Dinosaurs 1 (4/75) – 5 (12/75) 5
Vengeance Squad 1 (2/75) 3 (11/75) 3
War 1 (7/75) – 3 (11/75) 3
Wheelie and The Chopper Bunch
1 (5/75) – 3 (11/75) 3
Yang 6 (2/75) – 10 (11/75) 5
Yogi Bear 24 (2/75) – 29 (12/75) 6
236

1976

Barney and Betty Rubble
18 (2/76) – 23 (12/76) 6
Beetle Bailey 114 (1/76) – 119 (11/76) 6
Beyond the Grave 4 (2/76) – 6 (6/76) 3
Billy the Kid 116 (2/76) - 121 (12/76) 6
Blondie Comics 217 (1/76) – 222 (11/76) 6
Creepy Things 4 (2/76) – 6 (6/76) 3
Dino 14 (1/76) – 19 (11/76) 6
Doomsday+1 4 (1/76) – 6 (5/76) 3
Emergency! 1 (6/76) – 4 (12/76) 4
Fightin' Army 122 (1/76) – 127 (12/76) 6
Fightin' Marines 127 (1/76) – 132 (11/76) 6
Flintstones 43 (2/76) – 49 (12/76) 7
For Lovers Only 83 (2/76) 87 (11/76) 5
Ghostly Haunts 48 (2/76) – 53 (12/76) 6
Ghostly Tales 119 (1/76) – 124 (12/76) 6
Ghost Manor 27 (1/76) – 32 (12/76) 6
Great Gazoo, The 14 (1/76) 19 (11/76) 6
Great Grape Ape, The 1 (9/76) – 2 (11/76) 2
Haunted 25 (1/76) .30 (11/76) 6
Hong Kong Phooey 5 (2/76) – 9 (11/76) 5
House of Yang 4 (2/76) – 6 (6/76) 3
I Love You 116 (2/76) - 121 (12/76) 6
Just Married 109 (1/76) – 114 (12/76) 6
Korg: 70,000 B.C. 5 (2/76) – 9 (11/76) 5
Love Diary 97 (2/76) – 102 (12/76) 6
Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves
55 (2/76) – 60 (12/76) 6
Midnight Tales 16 (1/76) – 18 (5/76) 3
Monster Hunters 4 (2/76) – 8 (11/76) 5
My Only Love 4 (1/76) – 9 (11/76) 6
Pebbles and Bamm Bamm
31 (2/76) – 36 (12/76) 6
Phantom, The 69 (2/76) – 73 (10/76) 5
Popeye 133 (2/76) – 137 (10/76) 5
Sarge Snorkel 12 (1/76) - 17 (12/76) 6
Scary Tales 4 (2/76) – 8 (11/76) 5
Scooby Doo 6 (2/76) – 11 (12/76) 6
Secret Romance 36 (1/76) 41 (11/76) 6
Secrets of Young Brides 4 (1/76) – 9 (11/76) 6
Six Million Dollar Man 1 (6/76) – 4 (12/76) 4
Space: 1999 2 (1/76) – 7 (11/76) 6
Speed Buggy 4 (1/76) – 9 (11/76) 6
Teen Confessions 93 (2/76) – 97 (11/76) 5
Time for Love 46 (2/76) – 47 (5/76) 2
Valley of the Dinosaurs
6 (2/76) – 11 (12/76) 6
Vengeance Squad 4 (1/76) – 6 (6/76) 3
War 4 (1/76) – 9 (11/76) 6
Wheelie and the Chopper Bunch
4 (1/76) – 7 (7/76) 4
Yang 11 (1/76) .13 (5/76) 3
Yogi Bear 30 (2/76) – 34 (11/76) 5
245

1977

Billy the Kid 122 (9/77) – 123 (10/77) 2
Bionic Woman, The 1 (10/77) 1
Dino 20 (1/77) 1
Fightin' Army 128 (9/77) – 129 (11/77) 2
Fightin' Marines 133 (10/77) – 134 (12/77) 2
Flintstones 50 (2/77) 1
Ghostly Haunts 54 (9/77) – 55 (10/77) 2
Ghostly Tales 125 (9/77) – 126 (10/77) 2
Ghost Manor 33 (9/77) - 34 (11/77) 2
Great Gazoo, The 20 (1/77) 1
Haunted 31 (1/77) – 33 (12/77) 3
Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves
61 (9/77) – 62 (10/77) 2
Monster Hunters 9 (1/77) – 10 (10/77) 2
Phantom, The 74 (1/77) 1
Popeye 138 (1/77) 1
Scary Tales 9 (1/77) – 10 (10/77) 2
Six Million Dollar Man 5 (10/77) 1
Yogi Bear 35 (1/77) 1
29

1978

Billy the Kid 124 (2/78) – 125 (10/78) 2
Bionic Woman, The 2 (2/78) - 5 (6/78) 4
Doomsday+1 7 (6/78) – 9 (11/78) 3
Fightin' Army 130 (2/78) 135 (11/78) 6
Fightin' Marines 135 (2/78) – 140 (12/78) 6
Ghostly Haunts 56 (1/78) – 58 (4/78) 3
Ghostly Tales 127 (1/78) – 132 (10/78) 6
Ghost Manor 35 (2/78) – 40 (12/78) 6
Haunted 34 (2/78) – 39 (12/78) 6
Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves
63 (2/78) – 65 (4/78) 3

Haunted #5, Apr. 1972

Popeye #124, July 1974

Korg: 70,000 B.C. #1, May 1975

Monster Hunters 11 (1/78) – 17 (12/78) 7
Scary Tales 11 (1/78) – 17 (12/78) 7
Six Million Dollar Man 6 (2/78) – 9 (6/78) 4
Space Adventures 9 (5/78) – 11 (10/78) 3
Space War 28 (3/78) – 32 (12/78) 5
War 10 (9/78) 1
72

1979

Attack 16 (8/79) – 19 (12/79) 4
Billy the Kid 126 (1/79) – 133 (12/79) 8
Doomsday+1 10 (1/79) – 12 (5/79) 3
Fightin' Army 136 (1/79) – 142 (11/79) 7
Fightin' Marines 141 (2/79) – 147 (12/79) 7
Ghostly Tales 133 (1/79) – 140 (12/79) 8
Ghost Manor 41 (2/79) – 47 (11/79) 7
Gunfighters, The 53 (6/79) – 57 (11/79) 5
Haunted 40 (2/79) – 46 (12/79) 7
I Love You 122 (3/79) – 127 (12/79) 6
Monster Hunters 18 (2/79) 1
Outlaws of the West 82 (7/79) – 85 (11/79) 4
Scary Tales 18 (2/79) – 20 (6/79) 3
Secret Romance 42 (5/79) – 47 (12/79) 6
Space Adventures 12 (1/79) – 13 (3/79) 2
Space War 33 (2/79) – 34 (3/79) 2
War 11 (1/79) – 18 (12/79) 8
88

1980

Attack 20 (2/80) – 25 (12/80) 6
Battlefield Action 63 (7/80) – 65 (11/80) 3
Billy the Kid 134 (2/80) – 139 (12/80) 6
Charlton Classics 1 (4/80) – 5 (12/80) 5
Fightin' Army 143 (1/80) – 148 (11/80) 6
Fightin' Marines 148 (1/80) – 153 (12/80) 6
Ghostly Tales 141 (2/80) – 146 (12/80) 6
Ghost Manor 48 (1/80) – 53 (11/80) 6
Gunfighters, The 58 (1/80) – 63 (11/80) 6
Haunted 47 (1/80) – 52 (12/80) 6
I Love You 128 (1/80) – 130 (5/80) 3
Outlaws of the West 86 (1/80) – 88 (4/80) 3
Scary Tales 21 (8/80) – 23 (12/80) 3
Secret Romance 48 (2/80) 1
War 19 (1/80) – 24 (12/80) 6
72

1981

Attack 26 (2/81) – 31 (11/81) 6
Battlefield Action 66 (1/81) – 72 (12/81) 7
Billy The Kid 140 (2/81) – 145 (11/81) 6
Charlton Bullseye 1 (6/81) – 4 (11/81) 4
Charlton Classics 6 (3/81) – 9 (8/81) 4
Fightin' Army 149 (1/81) – 155 (12/81) 7
Fightin' Five 42 (10/81) – 43 (12/81) 2
Fightin' Marines 154 (1/81) – 159 (10/81) 6
Ghostly Tales 147 (3/81) – 152 (12/81) 6
Ghost Manor 54 (1/81) – 60 (12/81) 7
Gunfighters, The 64 (1/81) – 70 (12/81) 7
Haunted 53 (1/81) – 58 (10/81) 6
Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves
66 (6/81) – 69 (11/81) 4
Scary Tales 24 (2/81) – 29 (11/81) 6
War 25 (2/81) – 30 (11/81) 6
84

1982

Attack 32 (1/82) – 37 (11/82) 6
Battlefield Action 73 (2/82) – 78 (12/82) 6
Billy the Kid 146 (1/82) – 151 (12/82) 6
Charlton Bullseye 5 (1/82) – 10 (12/82) 6
Fightin' Army 156 (2/82) – 161 (12/82) 6
Fightin' Five 44 (2/82) – 49 (12/82) 6
Fightin' Marines 160 (1/82) – 166 (12/82) 7
Ghostly Tales 153 (2/82) – 158 (12/82) 6
Ghost Manor 61 (2/82) – 66 (12/82) 6
Gunfighters, The 71 (2/82) – 76 (12/82) 6
Haunted 59 (1/82) – 65 (12/82) 7
Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves 70
(1/82) – 72 (5/82) 3
Scary Tales 30 (1/82) – 35 (11/82) 6
Soap Opera Romances 1 (7/82) – 3 (12/82) 3
War 31 (1/82) – 36 (12/82) 6
86

1983

Attack 38 (1/83) – 43 (11/83) 6
Battlefield Action 79 (2/83) – 84 (12/83) 6
Beyond the Grave 2 (1/83) – 12 (12/83) 6
Billy the Kid 152 (2/83) – 153 (3/83) 2
Fightin' Army 162 (2/83) – 167 (12/83) 6
Fightin' Marines 167 (3/83) – 171 (11/83) 5
Fightin' Navy 126 (8/83) – 128 (12/83) 3
Ghostly Tales 159 (2/83) – 164 (12/83) 6
Ghost Manor 67 (2/83) – 71 (11/83) 5
Gunfighters, The 77 (2/83) – 81 (11/83) 5
Haunted 66 (3/83) – 70 (11/83) 5
Scary Tales 36 (1/83) – 41 (11/83) 6
Soap Opera Love 1 (2/83) – 3 (6/83) 3
Soap Opera Romances 4 (1/83) – 5 (3/83) 2
War 37 (2/83) – 42 (12/83) 6
72

1984

Atomic Mouse 1 (12/84) 1
Attack 44 (1/84) – 48 (10/84) 5
Battlefield Action 85 (2/84) – 89 (11/84) 5
Beyond The Grave 13 (2/84) – 17 (10/84) 5
Fightin' Army 168 (2/84) – 172 (11/84) 5
Fightin' Marines 172 (1/84) – 176 (9/84) 5
Fightin' Navy 129 (2/84) – 133 (10/84) 5
Funny Animals 1 (9/84) – 2 (11/84) 2
Ghostly Tales 165 (2/84) – 169 (10/84) 5
Ghost Manor 72 (1/84) – 77 (11/84) 6
Gunfighters, The 82 (1/84) – 85 (7/84) 4
Haunted 71 (1/84) – 75 (9/84) 5
Scary Tales 42 (1/84) – 46 (10/84) 5
War 43 (2/84) – 47 (10/84) 5
Zoo Funnies 1 (12/84) 1
64

1985

Atomic Mouse 10 (9/85) – 11 (11/85) 2
Captain Willie Schultz 76 (10/85) 1
Charlton Action: Featuring "Static"
11 (10/85) – 12 (12/85) 2
Dr. Graves 73 (9/85) – 74 (11/85) 2
Iron Corporal, The 23 (10/85) – 24 (12/85) 2
Li'l Genius 54 (10/85) 1
Prof. Coffin 19 (10/85) – 20 (12/85) 2
Punchy and the Black Crow
10 (10/85) – 11 (12/85) 2
Tales of the Mysterious Traveler
14 (10/85) – 15 (12/85) 2
Thane of Bagarth 24 (10/85) – 25 (12/85) 2
Timmy the Timid Ghost
24 (9/85) – 25 (11/85) 2
Yang 15 (9/85) – 16 (11/85) 2
22

1986

Atomic Mouse 12 (1/86) 1
Captain Willie Schultz 77 (1/86) 1
Dr. Graves 75 (1/86) 1
Iron Corporal, The 25 (2/86) 1
Li'l Genius 55 (1/86) 1

Love Diary #97, Feb. 1976

The Iron Corporal #23, Oct. 1985

Prof. Coffin 21 (2/86) 1
Punchy and the Black Crow 12 (2/86) 1
Timmy the Timid Ghost 26 (1/86) 1
Yang 17 (1/86) 1
9

Comic-Type Magazines

Emergency 1 (6/76) – 4 (1/77)
Sick 109 (4/76), 134 (Fall/80)
Sick Annual 2 (1978), 4 (1980) [3 exist?]
Sick Special 1 (1980)
Six Million Dollar Man 1 (7/76) – 7 (11/77)
Space: 1999 1 (11/75) – 8 (11/76)

The Charlton Comics **year-by-year checklist** is provided through the courtesy of **Dan Stevenson,** who has personally seen 99.8% of the books. **Mike Tiefenbacher** was also a major source of the data. See earlier issues of *Charlton Spotlight* for previous installments of this checklist: Complete title checklist (*CS* #1); Year-by-year checklist, Part 1, 1944–54 (*CS* #2); Part 2, 1955–58 (*CS* #3); Part 3, 1959–62 (*CS* #4); Part 4, 1963–66 (*CS* #5); Part 5, 1967–71 (*CS* #6). Please send any comments and corrections care of this magazine. And always remember: ***Charlton Comics Gives You More!***

the WEIRD kids™

Nicola Cuti

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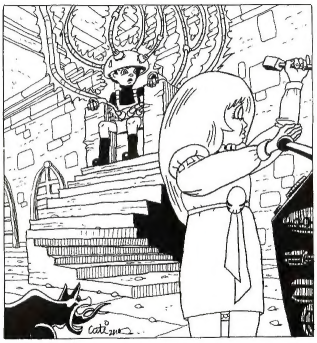
NO, ELENORA, **THAT'S** THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

THE WEATHER REPORT DID SAY TO EXPECT:"...A **HEAVY** SNOWFALL..."

MAYBE THE NEXT WELL WON'T BE SO... **POLLUTED.**



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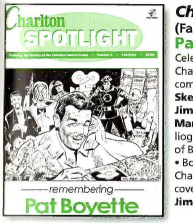
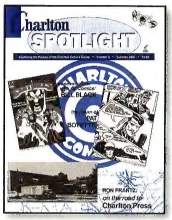


Charlton Spotlight #1
(Fall 2000)
Pat Boyette tribute

Celebrating the life & art of a Charlton legend, with memoirs & commentary by **Joe Gill, Steve Skeates, Alex Toth, Bill Pearson, Jim Amash, Ron Frantz, Don Mangus,** & others • biography, bibliography, & comprehensive checklist of Boyette's work in comics & film • Boyette cover gallery • complete Charlton Comics title checklist • front cover by **Tom Sutton** • back cover by **Jim Amash** • **48 pages, $6.95**



Charlton Spotlight #2
(Summer 2002)
Charlton summer fun

Cornucopia of Charlton fun, featuring interview with AC Comics' **Bill Black** • **Ron Frantz's** memoir of visiting **Steve Ditko** & **Charlton Press** • more **Pat Boyette,** including **unpublished Peacemaker** art • **Ron Fortier** & **Gary Kato** on one of Charlton's last superheroes, **Mr. Jigsaw** • classic 1950s **Joe Shuster** reprint • Charlton yearly checklist, part 1 • front cover montage • back cover by **John Buscema** • **40 pages, $5.95**

Charlton Spotlight #3
(Spring 2004)
Tom Sutton tribute

Remembering the life & art of one of comics' great stylists, featuring memoirs & commentary by **Steve Skeates, Nicola Cuti, Bill Pearson, Batton Lash, Jim Amash, Bhob Stewart, Steve Fiorilla,** & ***Stefan Petrucha*** • **unpublished** photos & art • Sutton interview by **Mark Burbey** • Sutton Charlton checklist, cover gallery, & classic reprint • **Jose Delbo** & **Henry Scarpelli** interviews • **Pete Morisi, Jack Keller,** & **Grass Green** spotlights • Charlton yearly checklist, part 2 • covers by **Tom Sutton** • **72 pages, $7.95**

Charlton Spotlight #4
(Fall 2005)
Pete Morisi tribute

Celebrating the life & art of **"PAM,"** the enigmatic creator of **Johnny Dynamite** & **Thunderbolt,** with memoirs & commentary by **Steve Skeates, Bill Pearson, Mark Burbey, Glen Johnson, Ron Frantz,** & others • **unpublished** photos & art • interview with **Steve Morisi** • PAM Charlton checklist, cover gallery, & classic reprint • Charlton **monster-mag** memories by **Denis Tiani** • Charlton memoir by **Tom Christopher,** with **unpublished** art • **Nicola Cuti's *Weirdlings*** • Charlton yearly checklist, part 3 • covers by **Pete Morisi** • **76 pages, $7.95**

Charlton Spotlight #5
(Fall 2006)
Joe Gill & Steve Ditko

Legendary **Joe Gill** ***tells all*** in 24-page interview with **Jim Amash,** featuring **unpublished** photos & art • action-heroes **Captain Atom, Blue Beetle** & **The Question** examined • rare **1950s Ditko** story reprint • **Steve Skeates** on working with **Ditko & Aparo** • the overlooked Charlton **text stories** • we visit Charlton in **1973** • **Nicola Cuti's *Weirdlings*** • Charlton yearly checklist, part 4 • front cover by **Nicola Cuti** • classic comic back cover by **Steve Ditko** • **80 pages, $7.95**

Charlton Spotlight #6
(Fall 2008)
All art & comics

Full-length, vintage, unpublished ***E-Man*** & ***Michael Mauser*** stories by **Nicola Cuti & Joe Staton** • ***Charlton Gallery:*** unpublished & rare art, artifacts & photos featruing Ditko, Sutton, Giordano, Newton, Boyette, Fraccio, Tallarico, Wildman, Gentile, Gill, Masulli, Santangelo, Gibson, & more • **Nicola Cuti's *Weird Kids*** • Charlton yearly checklist, part 5 • front cover by **Joe Staton** • unpublished back cover by **Pat Boyette** • **68 pages, $7.95**

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WAIT! I'VE GOT TO GET THAT LETTER BACK!
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RACKET SQUAD
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HOT RODS AND Racing Cars
31
CRASH!

GUNMASTER AND
BULLET
THE GUN BOY

you can't get away with murder!
CRIME
AND JUSTICE

SARGE STEEL
SPECIAL AGENT
THESE TWO ARE THE MASTERMINDS OF P.O.W.*
I'M SHOT! ... UGH!
THE DAY THEY KILLED SARGE STEEL
PROSECUTERS OF THE WORLD* THE ORGANIZATION THAT SHOCK THE EARTH!

BADGE OF JUSTICE
THANKS FOR THE EVIDENCE... WE'VE GOT WHAT WE NEED TO SEND THIS BIRD TO JAIL!

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THE HARD-HITTING STORY OF SCIENTISTS' MOST RECENT REVELATION

THIS IS
SUSPENSE
GOSH, LOOK AT THIS WELL! I'M GLAD YOU HAD THE BRAKES FIXED.
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SARGE STEEL
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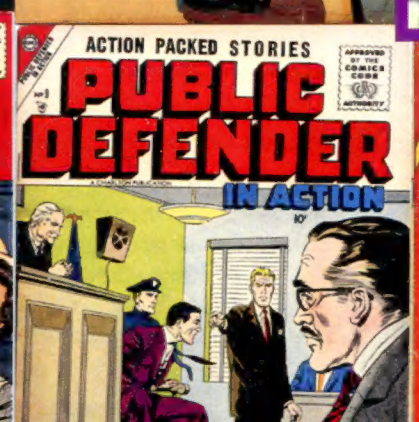
BEWARE OF THIS MAN! IVAN CHONG!
CRUSH SARGE STEEL, PRIVATE DETECTIVE!

JUST
Married
THEY HAD A HAPPY LIFE TOGETHER BEFORE HE CAME . . . TROUBLE ARRIVED WITH THE
STRANGER IN THE HOUSE

SECRET AGENT
the IRON MAN with the STEEL FIST
SARGE STEEL
"the case of the THIRD HAND"

NURSE Betsy Crane
BILL... FATTY... HOW COULD YOU?
OH BETSY!
Don't Miss A BROKEN TRUST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